/2 cont./

614 887 156 The chieftaincy of each clan was filled by the oldest man, who was called chunel. (It seems to have the same meaning as the word catinab, but some informants recognized the latter as the one used in the adjacent municipality of Oxchuc.) The office was not hereditary, and upon the death of a chunel the oldest man 156 614 888 of the clan was venerated as such. The chief of the clan was respected and feared, because he was recognized as endowed with supernatural power which, through his lab, he exercised over all 776 554 the members of the clan. Two informants of advanced age defined the chunel as "the oldest one and the greatest sorcerer." The lab feeds on souls, and a person who has "done wrong" is 776 761 "eaten" by the lab of the one offended and dies. In this way social control was exercised on and among the members of the [784] clan, never going beyond the limits of this. The life of the in- [626] dividual is intimately bound to the life of the lab, or guardian 776 spirit: the death of one brings with it the death of the other. All the Cancuqueros have their lab, but they hide it and sometimes [756] [827] deny it. The curer knows which is the lab of the sick person be- [787] cause "he hears it in the pulse." The lab reveals itself in dreams to "its owner," with whom it speaks because "it is his own company." One person discovers the lab of another "because he sees it." The lab takes care of its owner, defends him, and is the in- 178 614 626 776 strument of revenge for an injury unjustly received. Today this concept is intimately bound up with the omniscience of the patron saint; only with the permission of San Juan can a lab "eat" the soul of a chapomal, or "clan brother," and this permission is granted only in the case when the saint is unfavorably impressed by the conduct of the individual. In any case the lab never wreaks its vengeance except for a bad act that would fully justify 614 626 it according to the social morality. As can be seen, social control was not only rooted in the chief of the clan, but this function extended to the whole group, as happens at present.

2: Redfield & Villa Rojas E-4,5 (1938) 1939 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

and four *chuycales*, who are in charge of sacred matters. Certain shamans, called *dzunubiles*, also participate in calpul government.

In Cancuc, Villa did not inquire into the matter, but in Oxchuc and in Bachajón the calpules have separate patron saints and are known, in the case of Bachajón, by the names of San Sebastian and San Geronimo, in the case of Oxchuc, Santo Tomás and La Trinidad. In the church at Bachajón the santos belonging to the north calpul, San Sebastian and two others, stand on the left side of the church, while San Geronimo, San Manuel, and the Virgin, representing the south calpul, stand at the right side. It appears, however, at least in the case of Oxchuc, that the festivals of these saints are maintained by the people of both calpules jointly.

The antagonism between the calpules of Cancuc has expressed itself from time to time in violence. During Villa's stay it was rumored that the people of the southern half were about to attack those of the northern half, and indeed, shots were fired. Blom and LaFarge reported "a dragging feud" in this village.[28] Apparently marriages may and do take place between the calpules; there is no indication, however, that they are exogamous.

In Oxchuc a principal annual ceremony attends the transfer from one calpul to the other of a certain sacred book. This greatly venerated object was, after some reluctance, shown to Villa. He was requested to deliver to its custodians a dozen rockets, some candles, and some incense; he was then allowed to examine it in the presence of the chiefs and the chuycales of both calpules. It is a notebook of twelve paper sheets, 40 by 20 cm. in size; it has a deerskin cover. Of the twelve pages, nine bear writing, all but one on both sides. The text appears to be a series of orders set down by the Spanish authorities in the year 1674. The book is kept in a black wooden box; before and after removing it the chuycales prayed, kneeling, while incense was burned and the rockets were discharged.

The book is called *cahualtic* 'Our Master.' The ceremony of transfer of this sacred object takes place during the thirteen days beginning December 31. The principal members of the government of both calpules, numbering thirteen, assemble in the cabildo. The book is placed on a table with thirteen candles, thirteen rosaries, thirteen calabashes of lime mixed with tobacco, and thirteen vessels of atole. During the thirteen days the men remain segregated in the cabildo without contact with their homes or with women. Many prayers are uttered. At the conclusion of the period the box containing the book is escorted in solemn procession to the place it occupies during the rest of the year—not in the church, but in a special hut on the outskirts of the calpul of La Trinidad.

Information which Villa received from Indians of Chanal on the customs attending marriage differs in a number of respects from the account given by Blom and LaFarge,[29] or supplements that account, and therefore may be summarized here. There are no professional marriage negotiators. The boy's parents pay, ordinarily, four visits to the girl's parents to complete the agreement. On each visit they bring bread, eggs, fruit, and especially rum. The boy is expected

[28] Blom and LaFarge, 1927, 2:387.

[29] *Ibid.*, 2:358–359.

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621 632 178 ternated for each three-year term between the upper and lower sections.

But with the recent increase in dealings between the national and regional administrative centers and the local communities, recruitment into office as president and síndico has come to depend upon the candidates' possessing a knowledge of Spanish, literacy, and familiarity with the ways of Ladino society. Because of the relative scarcity of such skills, selection of these two officials has tended to ignore the former residence requirements relating to the dual division. Along with this change in the criteria for selecting these officials has come a decrease in the power and the authority exercised by the *principales*—elders from each side of the dual division who rose to their position by passing through all of the lower offices in the hierarchy—and a corresponding increase in the importance of the presidency.

621 632 754 756 This dual division also affected the structure of the curing profession. The curers are men who can overcome sickness caused by witchcraft because of their possession of an animal spirit (*swayohel*) and their knowledge of ritual. In each of the two sections of the town was a leading curer (*statal ʔuʔul*) who, by virtue of his age, experience, and recognized authority, was able to control entry into the profession. Their function was to prevent as well as cure, for the leading curers were also charged with guarding their section against the entry of witchcraft. In the last two decades, leadership by recognized elder curers from each side of the dual division has been lost, and along with it control over limiting the practicing of curing.

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ceeded along two lines of enquiry. First, I have analyzed the circumstances surrounding the deaths in as many cases as my informants could remember. Variations in the components of homicidal acts—the setting, agents, purpose, and outcome—suggested the different assumptions underlying each case. Secondly, I have correlated the different kinds of homicide with structural and organizational changes in the community. The analysis of cases in Section I summarizes the patterned components of behavior. The social environment providing the cues to the actors is explored in Section II.

I. THE PATTERNED COMPONENTS OF 37 HOMICIDE CASES

The following tabulations and discussion are based on the 37 cases presented in Table 1.

Who Is Killed-

Sex:	all male	
Age:	18–22	5
	27–30	7
	34–38	7
	42–48	8
	50	3
	60	2
	65	2
	70	2
	??	1
Occupation:	curer	8
	political leader	1
	farmer	28

One-half the total number of killings occurred to those between the ages of 34 to 50. However, as the six victims aged 60 and over indicate, survival to a late age does not ensure that one will die a nonviolent death. The age of the victim may be correlated with motive, insofar as some events leading to conflict occur only at certain times in the life cycle. Thus, betrothal conflicts involved only young men, while victims accused of witchcraft were older: 27 was the age of the youngest, and 16 out of the 18 men killed as witches were over 34. Cattle theft, on the other hand, occurred throughout the age range.

Eight of the victims—more than one-fifth of them—were curers, a much higher proportion than their share in the total population, for there are only about a dozen now living in the town center of 1,900.

There is a personality type recognized by the community as distinctive of those who "get

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682 epidemic (two cases), when people have drunk
[755] a great deal and their motive is fresh in their
[273] mind.

The settings in which homicides occur indi-
682 cate that a killer is expressing not his own
152 bravery but rather his fears. Wounds are fre-
154 quently inflicted from the rear, and often the
[273] victim is outnumbered and set upon by a group. The victim is sometimes invited to drink with his killer(s), and in this session he is disarmed psychologically and physically. Alcohol reduces the chance of his effective reaction, and this is important when a knife or machete is used. Shotgun killings are done at a distance and do not require this tactic, although it may still be employed. For drinking
682 serves to reduce the killer's own fears. Drink
273 "heats the blood" and makes unusual be-
152 havior possible. One killer, in recounting his act, was not trying to prove bravery, but rather his own good judgment and cool-headedness. The killer fired at the victim while he was sleeping, his back turned to the door, and killed him. The shot also entered the arm of the
[695] sleeping man's wife. She saw the killer as he left the scene, but testified in court that she
[683] had seen no one. She was, in effect, accepting his verdict that her husband was a witch.[4] This homicide was not regarded by the killer or by anyone else as a heroic act, nor was the killer in recounting it attempting to emphasize anything other than the necessity of the act.

682 411 *Instrumentality. Weapons and Wounds*

gun	14
machete	6
gun and machete	4
knife	3
knife and gun	1
knife and machete	1
knife and stone	1
hatchet	1
nail	1
sandals	1
??	4

The variety of weapons reduces the question of any technological determinism to a minimum. The actual weapon used seems to be a matter of convenience. When more than one is used, it is usually evidence that the assailant had helpers. The nail is unusual. It was hammered into the jaws of a man who had entered the curing profession at an age considered too
682 young. The attack on the jaws of the victim
774 seems related to the power of speech and to the
• 056 [text continues on p. 461-B]

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location of the soul, *sʔsiel*, in the tongue, *yat*, wherein lies the particular power of the curer. This possibly suggested the mode of attack.

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[223]
[224]
The instruments used to kill are carried by the farmers of this area most of the time. The men go to their milpa with a machete strapped to their side, a shotgun slung over their shoulder, and sometimes even a knife stuck in their waistband. They frequently interrupt work to hunt birds, rabbits, and deer. The shotgun does not excite suspicion or comment when it is seen. The men of Teklum are technologically prepared to kill in the course of an ordinary day's work.

682
[152]
[683]
The number of wounds and the thoroughness with which the job is done (see Table 1) suggest not so much the fury of the assailants as the fear motivating their act. In a witch-killing, it appears to be thought necessary to hack up the victim completely so that his power is effectively ended: one witch was cut into 32 pieces; another had 166 wounds.

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674
656
The death acts drawn up in the local courthouse have been increasingly specific in their statements as to the wounds inflicted ever since the government's intervention in the case of an accidental death in 1950. The local authorities were threatened with a fine of 600 pesos if the details were not properly recorded. The careful measurement of the body in relation to the road and to neighboring milpas and the measurement of the size and depth of the wounds provide the screen of complicity that wards off further investigation by federal authorities and preserves local independence. There is never any questioning of suspects or attempt to solve the crime by officials. The success of the ploy is illustrated in the following account:

> Pedro had animals at the spring and had gone out early with ropes in his bag to lasso them. He was found with a rope tied around his neck hung from a *čikinib* tree. We went out and measured the length and thickness of the rope and how many centimeters it penetrated his neck. We put all these facts in the report, which gave the cause of death as suicide.
>
> At that time we had a schoolteacher in town who asked the dead man's wife why the town didn't investigate who killed him because someone must have done it. He went with the widow to the Ministerio Publico in the capital. Well, when they came out, there were all the facts in the death act. [Informant laughed heartily as he recalled this success.] He saw that we had discovered the body at 3 P.M., that the rope was 15 meters

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682 539 783 Thus I fare well. I have not been killed, nor have I been sick.

682 156 828 A good man is of one heart, and he shows it by his humility, *ben k'un yo?tan* or "very soft heart." He can drink with friends on either side of the dual division of the town, and he is called upon in many household fiestas to greet the guests of the house-owner.

But the man who is "very strong of heart," *ben toyal yo?tan*, who "fails to take people into account," *ma l?awo la kuenta*, who "abuses people," *me yu wut*, has means of survival despite the many threats to his life. He surrounds himself with a circle of *compadres*, or godparents; he especially picks out curers, both to mitigate the use of their power against him, and for them to serve as intermediaries if he should have enemies with animal spirits. When a threat becomes imminent, he may stay within his house or limit his range of activities to a very circumscribed area, always taking a weapon when he does go out. He will usually try to limit his drinking, or give it up entirely. These short-range rules of avoidance are clearly indicated by the circumstances in which killings occur: in the hills or at night, when the victim is under the influence of liquor.

[608] [756] [273]

682 [578] These 37 cases of homicide reveal a regularity in the kinds of people and situations involved. The victims are most often men who assert power, principally curers, or men who violate standards of behavior by abusiveness or theft. Their killers are often linked to them by kinship or neighborhood, the bonds in which tensions are greatest. The regularity of time and place of homicide suggests the precautions that can be taken to avoid being killed if one has an enemy. The general failure of the community social-control agents to bring negative sanctions against a killer indicates that homicide is an accepted solution for interpersonal conflict. The structural setting that validates this behavior is discussed below.

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II. STRUCTURAL CHANGE AND SOCIAL CONTROL

682 178 121 626 Case analysis, useful for discerning certain patterns, is inadequate for understanding the interrelationships among a variety of social changes in the community. An increasing rate of homicide of this magnitude indicates fundamental changes in the social matrix in which individual decisions are made: it suggests not

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as with the cattle industry, is a covert cause for personal attacks on other grounds.

A third enterprise, trucking, has caused a realignment of political interests in factions associated with two truck-owning cooperatives. Membership in one of the cooperatives, or patronage of one of the two trucks, arouses the enmity of members of the other cooperative. Several threats have been made on the lives of the owners and the operators, but the only damage done has been to tires.

The tensions resulting from the introduction of these new enterprises cannot be fully measured by the deaths attributed to direct economic conflict. Wealth differences resulting from the new enterprises excite envy, and with it come accusations of witchcraft. In this community, witchcraft killing does not perform the normative function of reducing wealth differentiation that Kluckhohn saw operating among the Navaho (1944), since it is the poor man who is killed as a witch, not the rich man. The slaying of the envious witch exacerbates the economic differentiation that provides the seedbed for conflict.

Another new source of tension is found in the growing demand for political leadership or even independence from the township by the *ejido* colonies formed since land reform went into effect in 1937. The inept maneuvers of two founders of the ejido colonies in hot country resulted in two homicides (cases 12 and 18 in Table 1).[9] The increasing strength of these hamlets will mean that more attempts will be made in the future to gain political equality and/or independence. Whether this will result in increasing homicides will depend on social-control agencies external to the Indian communities.

Homicide occurring as a direct result of economic and political competition represents a new strategy in the community. The decision to kill rather than to use other negative sanctions is related to the social-control mechanisms discussed below.

Changing Mechanisms of Social Control

A system of social control rests not only on the exercise of negative sanctions, but on the sense of personal security derived from confidence in the institutions of control. In Teklum, the maintenance of control was formerly centered in the guardianship against malevolent spirits held by the ancestor spirits and the curers. The "police force," made up of ten

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625 The "police force", made up of ten
626 Indians of the town who served without pay for a year, acted as errand boys more than as guardians of public safety. The townspeople conformed to the cultural code of behavior because of a sense that their welfare was being cared for.

626 More recently, the breakdown of certain
178 structural features and competition between
75 new and old leaders have undermined non-
[128] violent methods for the maintenance of social control. These changes will be discussed in terms of (1) the organization of the curing profession, (2) conflict between the curers and the civil authority, and (3) how both the curing profession and the civil authority are affected by the breakdown of the old dual division of the town.

[124] (*1*) *Organization of the curing profession.* Perception of structural changes in the curing profession and their effect on attitudes are indicated in the following statement by an informant:

> Formerly there were not many curers. Only two—one in the low side and the other in the high side. They alone spoke together. They walked every night, looking and watching over the pueblo to see that no illness was brought in, checking to see who was bringing it and to see if there was any illness of God [reference to contagious diseases]. They saw which of the children had a soul
> [194] [reference to the third soul, the swayobel or animal spirit, which gives the power to cure and to do evil].
>
> If anyone wanted to be cured, they bathed them, cured them, and in a little while people got better because there was good illness only. If later on it turned into a disease of the devil, with their animal spirit they seized the force of the illness.
>
> When there was a contagious disease, and a witch "brought heat," and the children began to die, the two curers alone consulted and waited to see who had brought the evil and where they lived. One of them went to the town hall and gave an account of the fact that they had taken care of the evil and gotten rid of it. It was not necessary to gather together the pueblo—only the two knew what was the matter and how to care for it.
>
> The [two] leader curers of each section [*stalal ?u?ulatik*] alone ordered other curers. No one else could enter curing until permitted by the leaders. They continued in power until they died, and then one of the younger curers took over.
>
> Beginning in 1940, more curers started to enter on their own accord. The elder curer had died, and his successor was not recognized. People saw that someone could pulse, and so they would ask him to cure.
>
> Now when there is an epidemic, the president

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626 178 756 orders the curers to gather together. The curers look for the man who has "brought the heat." And then they kill him. Formerly it was not so.

The statement points to two interacting features of change within the curing profession: (1) the loss of leadership and of control over entry into the profession and (2) the loss of faith in the guardianship function of the curers. The effect of these changes has been to reduce security and the maintenance of social control.

756 178 [621] Formerly the recognized leader of the curers in each section of the dual division legitimized entry of new curers and expelled those who abused their power. When these curers died, there was no one of sufficient power to replace them. In listing curers who are active today, there is no agreement as to who the leading curers are or even as to whether there are leaders.

756 Loss of leadership in the curing profession has led to competition among the curers. There is discussion such as the following concerning who is the strongest:

> When X (a former curer, killed as a witch) was alive, he was land-control officer. When we were half drunk one day, the president asked him: "Tell me who is the strongest of all you who know curing." X replied. "Ah, you want to hear. There is no one who is very strong, only the dead Mamal K and myself." The president said, "But Mam D is good." X said, "Less so. I know because one time we proved it, at a meeting of the curers. I arrived as a sheep, and 'took out' [literal translation of *Hok*'] one black dog. He took out a sheep and a pig and ordered them to run. And I saw that they could not run. After my animals ran a little with his, mine arrived first. It is thus that I saw his were less strong."

[541] The present competition among the curers to assert their power by telling such stories or by displaying fearlessness in the bullfights held in community fiestas is symptomatic of the disruption caused by the breakdown in the hierarchy of the profession. When curing was a controlled profession, abusive conduct by the curers was minimized, but the new curers are reputed to use their power for their own gain. The following story is typical:

756 539 J, born in Tetikil, went to live in hot country. A friend invited him to drink. J, who was reputed to be a curer, said to his friend when they were half drunk, "Do you want to 'take out' a girl?" His friend said, "No, how can you?" "*Pendejo!*" J replied, "I can because I have an animal

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• 756 539 [swayohel]." "What one?" asked his friend. "You won't be afraid?" asked J. And then he put his shirt and hat on the floor, spoke three words (my friend didn't say what), and raised his hat and shirt, and a horse appeared. He did this again and a bull appeared. He was a great *?ak'lamal* [witch]. He stole a great deal. He was killed by five bullets.

[682]

756 [152] Such stories of curers "who walk on both sides" (*ibe?en ta ta mehl*) are favorites in the drinking sessions of Teklum. The power of curers inspires fear, so much so that some of the town presidents have been afraid of putting them in prison.

756 776 [133] [769] The open competition between curers serves to undermine the faith of the people in their guardianship function. This function was believed to have been acquired by the leaders from the *me?tiktatik*, the ancestors, who were said to live in a cave in a hill near the town, from which came the progenitors of the present townspeople. To carry out this guardianship function, the animal spirits of the two leading curers roamed the streets at night, when the evil spirits were out, each one remaining within the limits of his own side of the dual division. In this role, the two major curers were called the *me?iltatiletik*, a term derived from the one referring to the ancestors.

178 776 756 769 [796] 796 776 756 178 769 The loss of faith in the guardianship function of the curers was coincident with the loss of belief in the presence of the me?tiktatik. Some deny that the me?tiktatik live in the cave anymore, and others say they just appear on the day of their fiesta, the Day of the Cross in the Catholic calendar. This fiesta formerly was an important event in establishing the guardian power of the leader curers, since they were the only ones who dared enter the cave and talk to the ancestors. But this fear and this belief have gone. In 1960 one young man of the pueblo entered the cave on the day of the fiesta, when the curers were "deceiving the people" in claiming that they were talking to the ancestors; the fact that he dared enter the cave indicates an ambient distrust (in part resulting from verbal attacks by the priest, who at that time was gaining more power in the town). By now, on the Day of the Cross the church and civil officials, the women prayermakers, and an assistant of the priest, the *fiscal*, go to the cave, but the curers are no longer present, even as bystanders. The curers have tried to buttress belief in the guardianship of the ancestors by claiming that a nephew of the ancestors is now in residence in

[794] [793] 178 756 769

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178 the cave and that they are in communication with him. But these claims are met with ex-
*756 pressions of disbelief by the people. Almost
769 everyone is convinced not only that the curers do not now talk with the ancestors, but that the ancestors no longer look over them from the watchout hill outside their cave.

756 The loss of control by the curers is dramatized in the long passage quoted above con-
178 trasting the past and present treatment of
731 epidemics. Formerly the two leaders of the curers consulted together and announced to the president that they had rid the town of evil. Now the curers as a group are ordered to come before the civil authority. There, in a [273] long examination called *?iz yo?lan*—"taking the heart"—in which 18 liters of liquor are consumed, the assembled curers and civil authorities decide who among them is responsible for bringing in the witchcraft that is causing the epidemic. Later in the evening, [682] one of the curers is usually killed (cases 11 and 29, Table 1).

756 (2) *Conflict between the curers and the civil*
578 *authority*. The competition between the curers and the civil authority can be traced in a series of incidents beginning in the '30's and culminating in an open confrontation in the spring of 1966.

756 The first incident occurred in 1932, when
578 the town was still part of the neighboring
682 Ladino township:
683

> F went and asked permission of the authorities to
> [632] kill his enemy, a curer, who he thought was be-witching his brother in-law. The president went to the house of the suspected witch with the order to imprison him. He said they were going to take him to the neighboring township center to put him in jail. The group of authorities set off with the suspected witch. On the way, another group met them and asked them where they were going. The president replied, "To H." The group that had encountered them asked if they would like a drink to heat their body. They gave one cup, and then another. Then they cut up the suspected witch with a machete and put his body in the cave of the ancestors. When the widow enquired the next day where her husband was, the president said that the man must have gone to the finca.

The ambush by the killers was prearranged in the town court, and the president covered their deed when questions were asked.

[622] In 1940, the leading curer of the lower section was president. When he killed a man who

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accused him of being a witch, he was put in the local jail by the judge and then removed to the departmental capital. During his term of imprisonment an epidemic broke out in the town; it was attributed to witchcraft supposedly practiced by him and by two other curers who remained in town. These two were then imprisoned. After they were set free, all three men were killed in different episodes involving accusations of witchcraft. Permission to act as executioners was granted by the civil authority.

In the past, the public review of a case before a killing probably served to minimize homicide, since permission was not always granted. Since 1953, when a large highway first linked the town to the departmental capital and communication between this center of justice and the local township increased, the civil authority has not given permission, and prior review of witchcraft cases occurs only with epidemics.

The final incident in which the civil authority confronted the curers occurred in the spring of 1966. The president accused one of the curers of cutting short his life by lighting candles in the mountains. The curers were called together to hear the threat and to go to the hill to look at the evidence. The accused curer remained at home pleading that he was sick. He was warned not to pursue his witchcraft, and as yet there has been no use of violence on either side. This open confrontation without the use of violence may indicate a change in the strategy of conflict with the growing power of the president.

(3) *Breakdown of the dual division.* The loss of internal controls in the curing profession and the conflict for power and control by the civil officials and the curers are related to a more fundamental change in the social structure of the community. Formerly the division of the town into two sections provided a channel for opposition as well as cooperation. Recruitment into leadership positions in both the civil hierarchy and the curing hierarchy was based upon residence. The system provided checks and balances in the exercise of power, for the two principales—one from each section of the dual division—were supposed to act as watchdogs over the curers. The shift in the locus of social control from the principales to the president has been marked by the open confrontation with the curers.

The authority of the president, however,

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The authority of the president, however, depends on the use of legal sanctions of prison sentences and fines imposed by extracommunity enforcement agencies in the departmental capital. The weakness of these sanctions—the fine for homicide is 1,000 to 3,000 pesos or three to five years' imprisonment—means that these threats do not have a controlling effect on people's decisions to act. Homicide, carried out by individuals who feel themselves to be threatened, is a supplementary mechanism for social control. Cast in the idiom of witch-killing, homicide is the quasi-official execution of a community threat.

The breakdown in the former structural controls has not been compensated for by the intervention of extracommunity institutions. Attempts to circumvent killing are made by the priest, who counsels against it, warning that the killer will acquire the sins of the man he kills, and by the talking saint of Ixtapa, whom the Indians consult when they are pressed and who advises them to wait—their enemy will be killed for them. This advice is not sufficient to forestall all killings. Motivated by fear, some men still seek to eliminate the object of their fear. The sense of the guardianship of the ancestors and their intermediaries, the curers, is lost along with the intervention of the civil authorities. The individual reacts, using his own means and trying to get sufficient consensus to avoid reprisal.

III. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Homicide in the community of Teklum can be a statement of the fear of witchcraft, of revenge, or of quasi-official reprisal depending on the circumstances and social relationships involved. Even in this small, self-contained community, homicide does not have a single meaning, analyzable within a single framework of change.

Homicide is part of the expectation pattern of the town. The patterning of the acts of homicide in terms of time, place, and agent makes possible rules of avoidance both in long- and in short-term calculations for survival. The long-range rules require respect behavior to elders, equals, and juniors and the avoidance of abusive or boastful statements. The short-range rules are to avoid walking alone in the woods or milpas far from town, to stay home at night, and to stop drinking.

Despite the grim and expectable outcome of being killed, not all men heed these rules. The love of power and the projection of self into

3:Nash E-5 (1964-1965)1967
NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Teklum
[P. 469-A]

682 183 wider ranges of expression than are usually permitted in the community prompt men to assert the strength of their swayohel, to run races with the animal spirits of others in the assertion of pre-eminence, to boast of their material goods, and to "wake up dead."

682 694 178 578 The increasing rate of homicide is related to the following changes in the community:

(1) Increasing friction resulting both from the introduction of new economic enterprises and from political competition by the recently settled land-reform colonies has introduced a new kind of homicide, in which an opponent is killed either by the person whose interests are threatened or by hired killers. It has also stimulated accusations of witchcraft stemming from envy.

[754] 558 682 694 178 528 756 754 (2) The curers' loss of leadership and of control over entry into the curing profession has led to competition among them and to a loss of respect for their ability to overcome witchcraft. Curers have become the most frequent suspects of being witches.

(3) Loss of faith in the guardian ancestors and in the guardianship functions acquired from them by the curers has further undermined the position of the curers as agents of social control. This has aggravated the sense of insecurity and fear, which provokes the uncontrolled use of individual violence.

682 694 178 621 626 (4) The shift of power from the principales to the town president has led to a breakdown in the system of checks and balances exerted by the principales over the curers, and to a direct confrontation of the curers by civil officials.

756 (5) In the confrontations of the civil authorities and the curers in the '40's and early '50's, the fact that a witchcraft case was officially reviewed and the killing of the witch sanctioned may have served as a brake on the number of such homicides. Since 1953, when this practice was abandoned, those who have felt themselves or their families to be the victims of witchcraft have been left to their own recourse.

682 694 756 178 626 683

178 578 682 [621] [632] [756] The organizational changes summarized here are provoked by structural changes affecting recruitment into the positions of power and the validation of leadership in the exercise of power. The dual division of the town provided an accepted basis for recruiting

3:Nash E-5 (1964-1965)1967
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leaders, both in the civil authority and in the curing profession. The transition from the old hierarchy of control to the new leadership structure is still in process. In the most recent confrontation of the civil authority and curers, the fact that neither side resorted to violence suggests the transitional nature of homicide as a solution in intracommunal conflict.

This study of homicide indicates that the changing rate of behavior points to structural change, but does not in itself indicate what kind of change occurs or from what motives it stems. Qualitative case analysis related to structural changes within the recall of informants is essential for understanding social process.

[121]

NOTES

[1] Field work is based on two periods of residence in the community in 1964 and 1965; it was supported by the National Institute of Mental Health. I am grateful for comments by Paul Friedrich, Richard Henderson, Harold Scheffler, and Peter Wilson, who have improved the original version read at the 1965 meetings of the American Anthropological Association. I remain responsible for the contents of the paper.

[2] Henry and Short (1954:18) analyze both suicide and homicide as undifferentiated aggressive reactions to frustration, the rates of which vary – in the first case inversely and in the second case directly – with the strength of the external control system over behavior. Their assumption that homicide is motivationally a single phenomenon, and not an expression of a variety of motives, stems from the assumption that all cases of aggressive acts are the result of frustration. Straus and Straus (1964:587) apply a similar correlational analysis of homicide and suicide rates with structural features of society in Ceylon, but come to opposite conclusions. They maintain that one would expect greater evidence of homicide in a "loosely structured society," by which they mean one with considerable sanctioning of variation in individual behavior. These studies contradict each other in the conclusions that they reach by similar analytical processes, but they are attempts to move away from such psychoanalytic reasoning as the death-wish theory.

[3] Bohannan's (1960) survey of homicide and suicide in African societies represents a useful model for comparing the total pattern of homicide cross-culturally. In presenting the case material here, I have used a similar format, adding to it the circumstances surrounding the killing. In the analysis of these materials, I have diverged from Bohannan's model in trying to demonstrate the linkage among the components – the ratios, to use Burke's (1945) terminology of scene/setting/actor/agent.

[4] The term "witch" is a translation of the Tzeltal term *ʔah'-ʒomal*, literally "giver of sickness." The term "curer" is a translation of *ʔahtal*. The power to cure and to give sickness stems from the possession of a *swayohal*, or animal spirit.

[5] For a discussion of the tactics of gaining consensus in witch-killings, see Manning Nash (1960).

[6] Political homicide by agrarian leaders, which is so frequent in the central plateau (Friedrich 1962), is a relatively recent phenomenon in the retreat zones of Indian population. The cases analyzed by Friedrich are a strategy of political power stemming from a revolutionary background, and the cultural assumptions to which he points contrast with those underlying witch-killings. My only comparable case is, significantly, found outside the traditional center, in the new ejido colony.

[7] Jules Henry (1936) sees the formula of fear and anger as the

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón

the informal chief of one of the semi-separated, turbulent groups already described. He was a well-built, square-faced, sullen yet cunning looking fellow, with a long scar from a machete cut across one cheek, and credited with a number of murders.

The shamans or medicine-men, *poci'*, although primarily doctors, have a quasi-priestly status, the result of the intimate relation of prayer and healing, of which more will be said later. They are honored accordingly as holy men, as well as for the power conferred by their knowledge of medicine and charms. A shaman obtains his position by some years of study under another, who teaches him both medicines and prayers. His repute largely depends upon the results of his practice.

Certain older men are selected annually to have charge of the fiestas, or saint's day celebrations; they have charge of all preparations and of the conduct of the fiesta, as well as being usually responsible for the care of the various sacred properties during the year. These officers exist in the hacienda groups as well as in the tribes. At the Finca Tecojá, where a fiesta was observed in progress, they were an amiable pair of rather drunken old men, known as *Caporales,* and at most places, in common with other officers holding posts of Spanish derivation, they were known by Spanish names. Interestingly enough, in the villages with the Governmental organization described above, they rarely coincide with the Government appointees, although this may be partly due to the fact that they are usually selected from among the oldest men. In Guatemala these semi-church officers often are a mask for tribal positions of real power, as was found to be the case with the *tcimañ* of Jacaltenango, who will be described in writing of that place (Chapter XIX). Here their influence and prestige was relatively slight, save during the period when their duties placed them in charge.

Almost the only trace of pre-Conquest feeling is to be found in the great reverence shown towards all shamans and Government appointees. An ordinary Indian will offer food, drink, or tobacco to all men of authority present before taking anything himself, even though it means the consumption, for instance, of almost all of a bottle of *aguardiente* before he gets any at all. We saw a chief at Tenango, where the same system prevails, take a lighted cigar from an Indian's mouth, giving him instead some unrolled tobacco leaves. When first coming into the presence of such men, or passing them on the road, an Indian will take off his hat, bowing deeply; the chief or shaman touches the Indian's forehead, and he goes on. This is performed with grace and dignity. It is known as *k'ol-tanup,* "head giving" (*k'ol* from *hol,* head). Instances were observed of thus

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

"giving the head" to certain elder women, but the reason could not be ascertained.

Marriage is an economic and social affair, apparently free of religious significance. Don Arturo Tovilla of Cacate-el, gave us a description of the manner of seeking a wife, which is here paraphrased. It will be seen that the importance, ceremonially, centers on the contract with the parents, while the actual joining in marriage is not stressed.

The boy's father goes with the boy to the girl's house, both dressed in their best clothes, and carrying a gift of three bottles (pints) of aguardiente "and some animal." His father tells the girl's father that his son wishes to marry the daughter; to which the answer is to call the girl and ask her if she likes him. She says nothing, but keeps on scratching the wall with her finger and the floor with her toe, thereby indicating that she likes the boy, while showing the proper maidenly modesty. The latter gives her a coloured handkerchief, pearl beads, etc., with which the contract is sealed.

The boy is obligated to bring to her house what the father may ask, such as corn, beans, aguardiente, as well as to help in the work for a year. He makes a social visit each Sunday, which the girl must receive. At the end of the time appointed by the parents, he takes her to his house.

If the girl does not signify her consent in the manner described, the match does not take place.

When the parents of one or both parties do not countenance the match, it may happen that the children, taking the law into their own hands, run away. The procedure in this case has become formalized so that, while unpleasant enough to act as a deterrent, it recognizes this as a regular manner of marrying. This description also is paraphrased from Señor Tovilla. [115]

When the parents forbid, but both children desire the match, after the boy has gone to the girl's house and been refused, his obligation of respect is ended. He builds a house in a retired place in the jungle. He and the girl meet to make their plans where she goes to get water, for which purpose she may often choose a spring a kilometer or more from her house. At an appointed time, they run away.

When he has carried her off and hidden her, his parents must go and apologize to hers. The girl's father tells the boy's not to leave before being punished. He, however, finds and brings in the couple, who kneel before the girl's parents. The boy's shirt is taken off, and

5: Blóm & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

fragments of prayers to him will be given when discussing medicine. Distinct from the guardian of the cornfields, he is known only by name to the ordinary Indians, and mention of him appeared to alarm them a good deal.

Drunkenness still retains some of its old, ceremonial significance, in its association with fiestas, funeral rites, and particularly with medicine, under which head it will be more fully taken up.

There are a number of beliefs and practices, no matter what their origin, which, as they exist today, must be considered as superstitions rather than religion. Of such a type is the belief mentioned when speaking of hunting, that painting the bullet red would make it go further. This is of interest in the study of survivals, in view of the importance of the colour red in pre-Christian times. It may be equally well argued, however, that the red in this case represents the blood of the animal to be slain. Most of the superstitions are concerned with the *nagual* or the soul.

The set of ideas that constitute Nagualism is derived from ancient and important beliefs. The *nagual, tcul-el* (*tcul,* "holy," *-el* "the, the one"), is a companion-spirit to a man, taking the form of some animal. The stronger the *nagual,* the stronger the man, thus one with a jaguar for a familiar could work any kind of magic or other harm on one with a rabbit. We were told both that the *nagual* was assigned by popular consent, due to people's opinion of a man, and that it was seen in a dream. A man who has a quarrel with another will deliberately shoot animals of the species of the other's *nagual,* hoping to hit the particular one associated with his enemy. If that one dies, the man dies, and vice versa. Thus, it is plain that there is no idea of association with a whole class of animals, but only with one individual of a class.

According to Nuñez de la Vega,* in the seventeenth century the *nagual* was assigned by a shaman, who took it from the name of the day on which the individual was born. The child was later caused to see his *nagual* . . . *"se abrazan cariñosamente con su nagual, que por arte diabólica se le apparece muy doméstica y supersticiosamente cariñosa, aunque sea una bestia muy feroz, como leon, tigre, etc."*† According to Sapper (1925) exactly the same practices obtain in Guatemala today, the animal being caused to appear by means of hypnotism.

It is possible that further investigation would show a similar manner of choosing the *nagual* among the modern Tzeltal. How-

*Nuñez de la Vega, 1702. loc. cit.
†Extract in Paniagua, 1908. Page 87.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

796 178 However, much hinges on the difficult question of whether or not they still possess the old calendar, without which the divination would be impossible. This will be spoken of again. On the whole, the Tzeltal do not show anything like the robust survivals of old religion that are found in Guatemala; in this respect, also, they have retained only a degenerated form.

776 • 756 Concerning the attitude of the Indian towards his *nagual,* two stories may be told that have a certain interest. The first is an incident which occurred to us at Cacate-el, the ranch of Señor Tovilla in the Bachajon country. A Bachajon came in to complain that another Indian was casting spells on his fields and chickens. The other had taken a piece of dirt from his cornfield, so as "to gain consent of the guardian" (see above). He was making the corn wither and the chickens die. His power lay in his *nagual,* a *leon colorado* (*saxal-tcoq*), the most powerful that one can have. The Indian who complained had some much weaker familiar. We gave him a brilliant chromo of Saint Jerome with his lion; not only because St. Jerome is the patron of the Bachajon, but also because of the lion, obviously to him the Saint's *nagual,* which anyone could see was larger and more powerful than any known to the Indians. With this picture set up in his house, he felt that he could rest in safety. [123]

Señor Tovilla also passed on to us a story told him for true by an educated and trustworthy upper-class Mexican, an *abogado* (somewhat corresponding to the English solicitor). It is interesting for showing what is commonly believed even by the European people, although somewhat hard to accept. This man stopped at a Bachajon house, wherein he saw two old men sitting with their backs to each other, and two dogs fighting furiously on the floor. When he asked why they did not stop the fight, one of them answered:

"Our *naguales* are in those dogs, and my friend (*sic*) and I are fighting."

He went on to relate that, after the dogs gave up from exhaustion, both the men's faces were covered with black and blue marks.

[829] The Indians and their medicine men have succeeded to a remarkable degree in impressing the Ladinos with the reality and power of their magic, although it seems to be generally felt that it can only be used against themselves. Several very extraordinary stories were told to us by trustworthy people of more than the usual intelligence, and we were occasionally surprised at the reluctance of educated Ladinos to give information concerning native shamanism.

Because of the close relationship, the Indians try to keep secret their *nagual* lest an enemy should start hunting for it. Moreover,

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

to admit to having a weak one would admit weakness in magic and all other things, and set one's enemies immediately to work with the certainty of success.

Although the idea prevails among the Ladino people of Chiapas that the *nagual* and the soul are the same, in reality they are quite distinct. The soul, *lap*, is conceived of as a separate possession, distinct also from the principle of life, both in its conception and etimologically ("life"—*kucul*). This soul is a delicate thing, easily lost, and the object of many ceremonial precautions. Apparently it dwells within the body, but may be jarred loose, or lost in whole or in part.

Apropos of this, the Yocotan curse, given in Volume I, Chapter VI, a prayer to get hold of a man's soul, shows a similar idea. The damage is not done by catching the soul, but by the magic that may be worked on the man after it is caught. Save for the immortality which the Indian enjoys through it after death, his soul may be regarded as much more of a liability than an asset.

If an Indian falls down, the shock of the fall loosens his soul. He must lie where he is until his companions, or the next comers, place a circle of little crosses of grass about him. They then sweep up the trail behind him, gathering the dust and placing it in a heap by his head. On this the grass crosses are burned, and the Indian, inhaling the smoke, regains his soul.

It should be mentioned that these are a very sure-footed people, who seldom fall, and that no importance is attached to falling down when intoxicated.

In case of severe fright, the soul is also thought of as jarred loose. To cure this, an egg or a chicken is buried at the spot where the fright occurred. There is some idea of fright being caused by a spirit that must be placated, an idea which is differently expressed in a custom described as common among the Chol Indians near Palenque. With them, if a child is frightened, the mother beats it soundly, meantime crying "Go away, devil, go away, devil!" (*Que sale el diablo!*") In this case fright is definitely a form of possession. It is part of a conception found among many of the Mayance tribes that there is something unnatural and supernatural about a sudden shock of this sort. Being startled must be distinguished from merely being afraid of something, which is considered entirely natural and comprehensible.

On the trail the Indians sleep on beds of palm leaves which take an impression of the sleeper's body. Before going on, these leaves must be shaken out, and should also be held over the smoke of the

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

704 [513] fire and then hung up to destroy the impression and prevent leaving behind with it a portion of the soul, on which magic could be worked. Our own observation was that this precaution was carelessly observed.

789 123 Although magic may be worked on impressions on leaves, bits of hair, earth from fields, etc., the Indians showed no objection at all to being photographed beyond a certain embarrassment, and very little to being drawn. Often they asked to be photographed, and at some villages posed readily for sketches.

756 Although, according to Nuñez de la Vega,* there were originally several classes of shamans among these tribes, at present they seem to have narrowed down to one medicine-man type. Primarily these are doctors, but in their practice they preserve certain priestly char- 756 acteristics. They have a real pharmacopeia, and Ladinos and oc- 757 casional foreigners who have tried their skill testify to the effectiveness of the medicines.† All their knowledge, however, is kept in greatest secrecy. Just enough medicine is administered at once for a dose, the shaman watching to see that it is consumed, and none held out for identification. Of these we were able to find out virtually nothing. Serpent fat, *junto-tcan*, is in common use as a rub for colds. Head-aches and extreme drunkenness are treated by cutting the forehead with a bit of sharp glass, and bleeding is resorted to in some other cases. The use of the tourniquet in cases of snake-bite is widely known.

All applications of medicine are accompanied by prayers recited in such a way as to be unintelligible to lay hearers. The prayers are an essential part of the treatment.

756 Shamans are trained from early infancy, being selected probably by the older practitioners. One of them takes the student in hand and teaches him prayers and medicines proper to his particular specialty. With this goes a certain amount of plain magic. Whether a man may then study under others and continue learning is not known; however, they vary in reputation both for their ability at curing, and for clairvoyance, casting spells, etc. Casting spells is a sort of reverse function of doctoring, the man who can cure disease being, obviously, able also to cause it.

[273] One of the two words given for a shaman, *poci'*, shows an interesting resemblance to the Tzeltal for rum, *poc*. This similarity gains importance in view of the real connection between curing and drinking. A shaman definitely will not perform unless he is more

*Op. Cit.
†Cf. Sapper, 1925.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

or less inebriated, not from greediness, but because it is a ceremonial necessity for him to be in that condition when dealing with the sacred things. Drunkness was a requisite of certain functions among the old Maya, and with the present-day Lacandones,* the Chontal shamans similarly will not perform unless drunk.

Sebastiano Guzman, a Bachajon at El Encanto, a specialist on snake-bite cases, would not treat a friend for snake-bite, although he carried him on his back for two hours to get treatment from us, because the friend could not buy him any rum. It probably would be considered very dangerous to deal with the supernatural healing powers when sober.

When a group of Indians are drinking at any time, the shamans, as soon as they are drunk, go off together to one side and proceed to exchange prayers and prescriptions which they will not discuss when sober. They make a curious spectacle thus; a group of elderly men sitting in a corner passing a bottle about, plainly drunk, and gravely intoning prayers that are obviously to all of them matters of weighty importance.

Of their prayers two, or parts of two, were obtained. The first was copied by a Ladino secretary at El Encanto from the recital of an intoxicated shaman. The shaman became a general object of ridicule to all his people, lay or initiate, for having let out one of his secrets to an outsider. The second was recited by Señor Aguilar of El Encanto, who had overheard it. No one was able to give us any but the most fragmentary and unsatisfactory translations for these prayers; undoubtedly the text is in part archaic, and may contain some gibberish. The manner in which they were acquired, moreover, prevents accurate transcription. They are given here, rather than with the Tzeltal Texts in Appendix V, because of this failure to translate them, and their primarily ethnological value.

I.

hun ahau ilic tunic baken pusti-lum tal kowit' tal keke manic tunic inic kilan kun in ahau keke tunic hun tsak-unti-bak tsak-unti-tci.

Hun Ahau, the Guardian of the Mountains, has been discussed already. *ilic* was said to mean "drove out the sickness," and *tunic*, "placed the sickness." *pusti-lum* contains the stem *lum*, "earth." *tal* may be the stem of the verb *tal-el*, "to come." *kilan* is a lizard used in medicine. *keke tunic* was explained as meaning that the sickness was placed by means of *ajo* fruit. *tsak-unti* is remarkably similar to the Lacandone *tsakuntik*, "to redden," occurring in a

*Tozzer, 1907.

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The dimensions of contrast are not simple here, since there is involved as well /H-TUL YAN LUM/, "one of another pueblo" in reference as well to persons other than ladinos. [829] Furthermore, an immediate contrast that suggests itself to the informants when differentiating themselves from ladinos is:

/H-TUL LUMAL/	/KAXLAN/
/POBR-ETIK/	/K'ULEHETIK/
"the poor ones"	"the rich ones"

[756] Among other forms of the class is a series which represents alternative terms for a single group of people, i.e., native curers:

/H-*UL~H-POXTAWAN(EH)~H-*AK'-POX/~/H-ME*TIK+TATIK/

which while possibly distinctive (we are unprepared to say until our studies of Tzeltal medicine have proceeded further), share the characteristic performance /PIK C'IC'/ "pulsing." A contrasting form /H-*OKTOR/, "doctor," marks a curer who does not know how to pulse, but who instead gives "consultations." The form /*OKTOR/ differs from the others in this subset in that it may also be used as a modifier, as in /*OKTOR PEYRO/, "Dr. Pedro" (in reference to an Indian nurse) and /*OKTOR+KAXLAN/, "ladino doctor."

statement would be that the names of illnesses are reflexes of all these pressures.

Curing strategies more or less line up with this symptom-illness distinction. The early stages of a disease process are handled by medicine, the appropriate form of which and access to which, most adults in Aguacatenango control. For example: for stomach gas, give bicarbonate soda with lime (to drink); for a cough, give boiled brown sugar (to drink); for nausea and headache give té limon. As the combination of "symptoms" increases in the later stages of a disease process, most adults lose control over knowledge of the proper array of medicines and rituals. These in turn become combinatorially more complex. It is at these later stages of the disease process that curers and doctors are called in.

Curers and doctors differ most obviously in that doctors are ladinos and curers tend to be Indians (although ladino curers are known). In addition, they deal with illnesses in sufficiently contrastive ways so that two role identifying labels must be maintained. They are both recognized to be able to reduce illness (as a basis for further inference and action) by prescribing medicines that can be purchased in the pharmacy. These may be taken orally, injected, or applied as a salve. The doctor further prescribes and may himself perform some minor surgery, X-ray examinations, and other traditional Western-European

75 not yet appear to be a popular alternative. Generally, the doctor is the last of all medical practitioners referred to in exhausting the curing options in Aguacatenango, though individuals who have had a successful relationship with the doctor are more
• 756 likely to pursue that option sooner. The only other major class of medical practitioner is the talking saint. Talking saints are more or less representational images of saints who, in conjunction with their "owners" can actively consult with human beings about their trials and tribulations in the world. The most powerful of this class, San Miguel of Soyaló, is about an eight hour trip and a 200 peso fee from Aguacatenango. Talking saints share more features with the curers than they do with doctors. They, like the curers, are predestined by God to their role,
[755] but they more directly represent God's omniscience. The cure of the talking saint is more powerful as can be measured by the greater expenditure of funds for such a cure, or as can be measured by his greater ability to divine in the life history of the patient the principal sources of illness.

128 Admitting then, that illness has general characteristics as described above, we turn our attention to the multiple relations between illness and the drinking of aguardiente.

273* monial drinking pattern, the curer, no matter what his age rela-
755 tive to the age of others present, is served first.[1]

273* Drinking by participants in the curing ceremony appears
539 in several text fragments as follows:

MAC'ATIK X*ULAH NAL YA HUC' TRAWO X*OC SPAS POX YU*N HIC *AY SPERSA *A.

Those who cure drink trago first before they go in to cure in order to increase their strength.

SPISIL YO*TAN X*OC TA POSTAWANEH.

So that they will be confident when they go in to cure.

HA* LA YAK' BALOR HAL TRAWI.

It's the aguardiente that gives strength.

PERO *AY H*OLIL MA*K YUC'IK TRAWO HIC NAX YA SPAS POSTO, HA* HIC YA SPASIK POX H*ULELTIK *ABI.

But there are some who don't drink trago before they cure, that's the way they are.

Also:

M. TU*L LIHK YU*C'K.

How did they begin to drink?

C. *E HA* XK'O YILIK HAL XC'IN YAHTAL YO*TAN HKUMRE SME* HOSEPA NUN E.

They went to attend the delivery of my comadre, Josefa's mother, over there.

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[1] From this relative positioning of drinking we conclude
[156] [554] that the role of curer in the curing situation has more status than the role of old man. In most situations, as has been previously noted, the oldest man present is generally served first.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

Acknowledgments

My study of the people of Tzo'ontahal was made in four field sessions, the first in 1957 with return trips in 1958, 1964, and 1965, for a total of eighteen months. Brief visits were made in 1966 and 1967. With each returning visit it was possible to penetrate more deeply into the lives and experiences of the villagers, most of whom were highly resistant to an outsider on the first contact. I began writing the book in 1966, and some of the predictions I made came true before I finished it in 1968. These included the demise of the ceremonial leadership of the *alfereces*—the officials in charge of religious celebrations—the waning of the community status of curers, and the killing of one of my principal informants who had taken a leadership role before acquiring the traditional validation of age and experience in office. The transformations over the period of my study in this community created difficulties in recording and organizing my material. I owe whatever clarification has emerged to the efforts of Jane Olson and Gale Griffin of Yale University Press.

I am indebted to the National Institutes of Mental Health, which made possible the research for this study. I owe an intellectual debt to Sol Tax, who introduced me to the problems and potentialities of the area as a locus for field study, to Norman McQuown, who gave me the first instruction in Tzeltal and provided a grammar which facilitated learning the language, and to Manning Nash, who provided some of the earlier formulations of the culture from which I have borrowed. I am grateful to Duane Metzger and Gerald Williams, who generously provided equipment and facilities for work with informants in San Cristóbal Las Casas in the summer of 1964. Alfonso Villa Rojas, who was director of the Instituto Nacional Indígenista, was of great assistance in the first summer's field trip, introducing me to leaders within the town and in the Instituto's headquarters in Las Casas.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

pact settlement with the emphasis on the bilateral kinship group. The authority of the elders in settling conflicts in the family and the community is weakened, although the hierarchy remains intact. In religious institutions, the personnel has remained the same, but the authority of the religious officials has weakened and the belief in the deities and ancestral figures has been undermined.

Political leadership is the most dynamic area of change. The power of the *principales* had already been taken over by young civil officials when I first went to the town in 1957. The curers, who retained the power derived from belief in their control over the supernatural, were the core of resistance to change in the decade that I knew the community. But this control was being challenged by civil officials and factional leaders, who were aware of its repressive effect. The dynamic aspect of the political sector is linked to the fact that the new leaders saw the necessity of seizing power from those who were privileged in the traditional society. They were reworking the social structure to pave the way for the acceptance of development opportunities being offered by the national government.

In Chapters 10, 11, and 12 I have summarized the structuring of behavior in roles, place, and time and described how these patterns have been affected by change. The following questions are raised in the summary chapters:

1. The role system: How are people recruited into roles? How are roles coordinated? How are performances evaluated? The matrix of roles provides the patterned expectations of what others will do in a given situation. Some of the decisions made in assigning people to roles allow little room for choice. In other cases, new functions, such as those imposed upon governing officials, have replaced traditional bases for making decisions and in turn upset the balance of power between elders, curers, and leaders in civil office. (Continuity and change in the role structure are analyzed in Chapter 10.)

2. The setting: How is appropriate behavior defined for each institutional setting? What kinds of behavior are replicated in each setting? How are changes in role relations reflected in positions assumed in each setting? Observations of behavior in the church and the

Spirits and Places 9

Patronym	*Alannantik only*	*Ahk'olnantik only*	*Alannantik and Ahk'olnantik*
Lopez Tz'u?u			12
Lopez Wolto			50
Lopez Yutz			16
Perez			9
Perez Huhan			4
Perez Kam			11
Perez Kantiron			23
Perez Os			17
Perez Otol			16
Perez Tut			18
Perez Ventura			11
Sanchez		3	
Santis Peč	1		
Vasquez		3	
Total	26	58	629

The curing hierarchy was organized on the basis of the dual division until the 1940s. There were two leader curers, one on each side, who were in charge of guarding their own side against intrusion of evil spirits. During the 1940s a breakdown in the hierarchial principle led to some lessening of the power of the group and a collapse of the leadership. People now patronize curers from either section, but there is some feeling that it is safer for the curers if they cure only on their own side.

The dual division persists as a basis of economic organization only in the case of the cattle owner's associations. Pasturage on communal lands is allocated according to residence in the upper or lower division. Since cattle raising for beef has increased the size of herds the cattle owners on each side have formed an association to clear the waterholes and celebrate fiestas at the major waterhole on the Day of the Cross. None of the other new enterprises in town organize on the basis of the territorial division.

In the etiquette of social interaction, the dual division is still taken into account. When a resident of one side walks in the streets of the other side, he is not expected to greet passersby or people in their houses with the usual *b'onme wil* or *b'onme tat* (I go, elder sister or father, or whatever the appropriate extension of kin terms may be). Such street greetings are mandatory on one's own side of the town. It is considered much safer to

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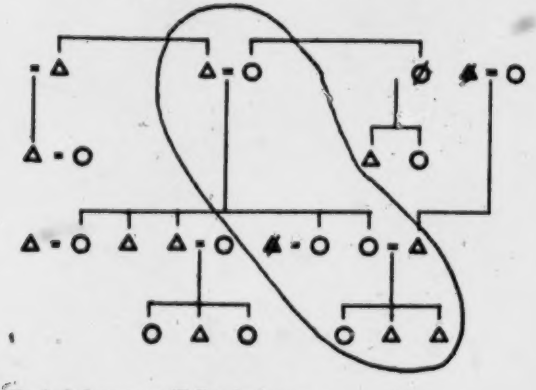
342 527 789 *First house fiesta.* In preparation for the fiesta to inaugurate the wooden frame of the house, the older men of the household and the curers make palm crosses called *Tatik Martil,* another reference to San Pedro Martyr. Older men are chosen to do this task because their procreative powers will not be endangered by handling this powerful symbol. Branches of the bushes growing near the springwater of San Nicolás are cut by the younger men of the household to be arranged in an arch, while the women make incense burners and clay candle holders. The protective symbols used in the fiesta—the arch of branches and flowers, the candles, liquor, handrolled cigarettes, palm crosses, and springwater in a gourd—are arranged before the center post of the back wall of the house.

Fig. 1. Relatives Present at House Fiesta

342 527 602



Encircled group will live in house.

342 527 756 788 The activities of a house fiesta observed in 1966 are described below.

The future occupants of the house sat in a row facing the curing arch. Two curers officiated, the elder a resident of the side of the dual division in which the houseowner lives and the second from the barrio in which his son-in-law, Santiago, was born. The elder curer lit the candles at the center post of the back wall, while the younger curer lit those at the center post in the middle wall. The mother of Santiago lit the incense and placed

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it before he arch. The younger curer then took a bunch of the branches of spring bushes and brushed each person over the head, shoulders, back, arms, and legs. Liquor was passed around to the visitors and participants. The elder curer took the bunch of branches, prayed, and brushed the future occupants. The younger curer followed him with another brushing.

The elder curer put some powder in the springwater. He then took a rattle, stuck it it in a bunch of the leaves from the spring, gave it a couple of shakes as though testing it, and handed it to one of the b'alnial (*young male assistants*). *He then stood before the candles at the back center post, bowed to it, turned, and bowed to the opposite center post. He poured the springwater in a gourd and gave it to Juliana, the houseowner's daughter, who passed it to each member of the household. The curer then took out four cigarettes and put them on either side of the candles. He greeted everyone present and delivered the following prayer:*

[082]
[639]

May no witchcraft enter.
May all the children be cared for.
I can see and hear who enters.
Of one heart are the women, of one heart are the men.

Santiago began to play the guitar as his wife, Alberta, brought in the coffee and rolls. She handed the first cup to the elder curer. This was followed with a serving of rice and tomatoes. Before he began to eat, the curer said, "good afternoon" to all present.

After the meal, the elder curer led the household members outside. He held one of the palm crosses at the corner post of the house and prayed; then Santiago pounded in a nail to hold it. Each member of the household, including the small children of Alberta, went up and kissed the cross in turn. They went on to the other main posts of the exterior of the house where they did the same thing. They entered the house and continued drinking the rest of the afternoon. Cigarettes were passed around, and the men began to joke. Drinking is compulsory: everyone who attends must drink equal amounts of the liquor served.

[273]

Each of the ritual items is introduced because it contains a powerful soul. The branches and the springwater contain souls associated with the

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342 527 774 788 spring. The gourd is used as a container for the springwater because, like all growing plants and unlike metal or glass containers, it has a soul. The soul of the tobacco plant is considered particularly strong. The smoke of the candles and incense are the media through which prayers to the spirit [782] of the house are transmitted.

342 527 788 776 533 The house fiesta serves three functions: (1) introducing the spirit of the house inmates to the house spirit, (2) creating a harmonious setting for spiritual interaction of the members of the household and the house spirit, (3) protecting the house against the intrusion of evil. The introduction is achieved by brushing the household members with the branches from the spring, and the harmony is brought about by drinking liquor, playing the guitar, and dancing. The music of the seed gourd, the guitar, and sometimes a radio or phonograph makes the residents, their guests, and the house spirit happy, or "of one heart." Protection is insured by [781] nailing the palm crosses representing the Lord of the Lightning to the house posts.

342 527 782 • 756 *Second house fiesta* ("meal for the house"). When a meal is given to the spirit of the house earth, the house is arranged as for the house fiesta with curing arches set in front of the center posts at the back and middle walls. The same guests are invited as for the first fiesta. The family buys a sheep and slaughters it in the morning by stringing it up to the center post by it paws and slashing its jugular vein. When the blood has drained into the square hole opened at the base of the center post, the curer removes the head and buries it in the hole. Some curers bury the four paws as well, while others prefer to add an offering of five pieces of bread in a new pottery jar, twenty measures of chocolate, thirteen cigarettes, and a bottle of liquor covered with a new cloth. The head of the sheep is placed so that the eyes look up to watch over the inhabitants. Some refer to it as the *me?iltatil*, identifying it with the curers (who are called me?iltatil in the context of guardianship) and thus with the ancestor guardians.

During the house fiesta I observed in July 1967, an old curer who had officiated at the first ceremony served again. A neighbor, who was not related to the houseowners but who was skilled in butchering, slaughtered

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the animal. The curer received from him the severed head and paws which he placed in a large gourd. Then the curer served a potion of herbs in springwater to all of the members of the household. The final ritual act was for the curer to smoke an article of clothing belonging to each member of the household over the incense burning in front of the center arch at the back wall. Liquor was served continaully throughout the ceremony, the first drink always being given to the curer followed by one to the elder houseowner. The first drink was served immediately after the cutting of the jugular vein of the sheep. Flowing blood, water, and liquor are spirit media symbolically linked in ritual behavior. Between each of the major ritual acts—the slaughtering of the sheep, the burial of the head, the serving of the springwater and herbs, and the smoking of the clothing with incense—the curer prayed, but his prayers were so mumbled that I could not hear or record them. Informants said that it was a variation of the prayer given at the first house fiesta. After the rituals, a stew made with the sheep meat was served with tortillas to all the visitors. The music of guitar and gourd rattle, played during the ritual by young male relatives continued after the meal, and the guests remained in the house drinking and dancing for the rest of the afternoon.

Elements of these house fiestas are repeated when any of the children of the household is ill. A severe illness, diagnosed as being caused by the devil eating the soul of the patient, requires offering a meal to the house spirit. The square hole is reopened, and a live black chicken, male if the patient is a boy and female if it is a girl, is placed inside. A food offering of one-fourth liter of liquor, one peso's worth of bread, and 50 cents' worth of chocolate is placed inside with the chicken, and a square board is fitted on top of the hole "to keep the chicken alive for eight days so that the house spirit will hear his cries." When the curing arch is removed, the hole is filled in with dirt over the chicken, now dead, which provides a meal for the spirit house earth.

When the houseowner is sick, an appeal for health is made to the spirit in the house post. The members of the household kiss the post, a splinter is removed and burned in an incense burner with *pom*, the resin of pine. This odor is pleasing to the house spirit.

When a serious illness caused by witchcraft has been cured, the patient

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"Good."
They waited a while and the water came. "Are you going to drink?"
They drank, and then they made the sign of the rainbow. The president sent his síndico to meet them. The síndico got drunk on the way. He sat down halfway in the road. The brothers met him there. They were angry that a fiesta was not prepared for them. And for this they left town, and went to live in Chiapas.

This tale is known to everyone in town, and there is no doubt as to its authenticity expressed by those who have given versions of it. When I took some of the Indians on a trip to Guatemala, they pointed out the rocks where the brothers encountered the devil. When they arrived in Guatemala and saw a bus marked Antigua they expressed amazement that the town was still in existence.

Some people claim to have seen the ancestors, whom they describe as wearing the old style costume—a long shirt with the hat now worn by the alfereces. The ancestors are believed to have watched over the village from a mound rising abruptly before the mouth of the cave, called Hol Shan, or Head of Palm, because of the trees growing on it (Plate 1). From this eminence they could watch the streets of the village and see whether anyone was trying to bring in evil (Plate 2). They were able to discern the power of evil in the souls of the newborn and could snatch the soul before its possessor grew up to cause evil. Their human agents in guarding the town against evil were the curers (*ʔuʔuletik*), who in the context of guardianship were called *meʔiltatil*.[7]

Each year on the Day of the Cross, May 3d in the Catholic calendar,[8] a fiesta is held in honor of the ancestors. It refers back to the fiesta which ought to have been held for the returning Shuntonetik, and is performed in the interest of the whole community as a means of ensuring good relations with the ancestors.

Formerly the curers were responsible for conducting this fiesta. An informant recalled the ritual:

7. The guardianship role of the curers is related to the functions of pre-Conquest officials, called *ghcunalum*, "caretakers of the soil" (Calnek 1962:25).

8. The date of the Day of the Cross was changed by the Vatican in 1964. When the local priest tried to reschedule the fiesta in the community, he encountered strong opposition. The Indians continue to celebrate the Day of the Cross on May 3d.

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The curers used to go up to the cave with the alfereces, the mayordomos *[religious officials], the prayer reciters, and the people of the village. When they arrived there, the mayordomos played the guitar and gourd rattle. They lit candles and incense, and the leading curers would go inside the cave. All the people contributed money for the liquor and candles which was collected by the officials. They said that they spoke to the ancestors inside, where there was a lake and a beautiful field. They asked for rain and good crops. They would come out and tell the people waiting outside what the ancestors had said.*

Then one year [in 1957] during the fiesta of the cave, the curers went into the cave. The people said to the curers, "We want to see the owners." The curers said they would come out, but they didn't. The people waited and waited. A boy went inside with the curers. They tried to prevent him, saying, "Won't you be afraid?" He said, "No, let's go in." They entered twenty feet inside the door. The curers said, "Let us stay here." The boy asked them where was the river, the lake, and the milpa that were supposed to be inside. The curer replied, "It is all a lie. Now you know; don't tell the people." But when he came out, the boy told the people it was all a deception.

Since the late 1950s the ritual has changed. The curers no longer officiate, nor do they enter the cave and speak to the ancestors as they did formerly. The *fiscal,* or assistant to the priest, leads the mayordomos, alfereces, and prayer-reciters to the cave on the Day of the Cross and simply replace the palm cross at the entrance to the cave just as they do with the palm crosses fixed to the wooden crosses marking the roads leading into the town. The curers have attempted to revive the belief in the presence of the ancestors by saying that their nephew is in residence now, but no one I ever spoke to believes this. Most people agree that the ancestors live permanently in Chiapa de Corso.[9]

The hill and cave owners. While people try to maintain a good relationship with the spirits of the house, of the springs, and of the Cave of the Ancestors, they avoid the dangerous spirits of the hills and caves

9. A similar myth concerning the departure of the ancestors to go live in Chiapa de Corzo exists in Pinola (Hermitte 1964).

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which have the power to mislead, give illness, or capture people to work for them. Only the most powerful curers and witches, and the very greedy approach these spirits for they are reputed to be very "live" and maliciously clever. Snakes are the offspring of the hill and do the bidding of the hill owners.

Wealth in the form of livestock, corn, or gold can be gained from some of the cave owners upon request, but there is danger in receiving these gifts since they must be reciprocated. Among the cave owners who give gifts is Don Klabil, a deceased moneylender of the neighboring town. After his death in the 1940s, his spirit went to live in the hill bordering the two towns. People say that when he was alive he used to get money from the true owner of the cave. Those who have been inside the cave say it is filled with animals—cattle, horses, rabbits—which drink at a large interior lake. The appropriate approach for requesting wealth is to go on Thursday, "when the earth is open," and burn candles and incense. When the request is granted, the recipient must light candles at the cave every Thursday, and after his death he must work forever for the cave owner. It is said that at his death his wealth dies with him—usually all has been spent, and in fact children are left poor. Some say the spirit of the firstborn child of the recipient must be given to the owner to work for him. For this reason, there is no envy felt by neighbors when they see the increasing wealth of a man who has visited the caves and received such gains and he is doubly protected because no one can hurt an "enchanted man" (one who has entered the cave) with witchcraft.

Ladinos' belief in the cave owners gives support to the Indians' credence in their power. Ladinos inquire of Indians where they can find treasures. Once the request to the hill owners is made, it is essential to follow through correctly. Everyone in town knows the story of Martin Bautista, a curer who went to speak to the true owner of the hill in which Don Klabil lives.

He knew how to talk to the owner. The owner told him that at midnight on the following day, he would give him what he wanted. At midnight Maria, his wife, was alone in the house. She heard a noise and the sound of "Andale, burro!" *Then there was a knock at the door. When the*

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woman opened the door, she said, "Ay, Dios!" *The owner of the cave did not like this, and at that moment, he disappeared. Her husband returned the next morning. He beat her when he heard of the arrival of the hill owner and his disappearance when she invoked the name of the Lord. From that day on, he lost his luck and remained a poor man.*

The personalities of the cave owners are more fully defined than those of the spirits which reside in the forests. These tree spirits are able to talk to people, or they may sing, "as a mother sings to her child." They sometimes play tricks, misdirecting those who are lost in the woods. A man who intends to kill his enemy may go to talk to the tree spirits to gain their advice. Some plant spirits, such as tobacco, are stronger than others. Indians sometimes address the tobacco plant as "our grandfather" when they approach it, asking leave to pass. Some say that if you chew the tobacco plant you will have strength to overcome evil spirits when you walk in the woods.

An especially fearful group of spirits called *bohwaletik* roam the wooded hills in the late afternoons. These spirits, who look like Ladinos, are feared because they cut off people's heads to feed to the church bell in a neighboring town or to give to the spirits of major construction projects, such as dams. Suspicions are immediately aroused when a solitary Ladino is seen on the outskirts of the town near evening, and if several Indians sight him, they may even kill him.

Persistence of belief and rituals related to the old gods and demons that were part of the Maya pantheon is directly related to the fact that the Indians continue to live in the same place surrounded by the hills and caves that were the habitations of both good and bad spirits. The landscape serves as a mnemonic device, keeping alive the myths of the past. Everyone accepts the knowledge that the spirits once lived here; the only doubt is whether they continue to inhabit their appropriate places, particularly in the case of the ancestors who were responsible for crops and security. This is not a crisis of loss in belief, but a phasing into history of the mythological past. Since there is no longer acceptance of the curers' claim to communication with the spirits, the Indians believe they may have gone elsewhere. It is characteristic of these Indians that they do not

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hilltop with a digging stick. He knelt and prayed, asking for rain. At that very moment, the rain came. He put the seeds in the holes he made, and from then on people have been planting in the hills.

Other saints are charged with providing rainfall. The saint of greatest importance in this respect is Santo Tomás, the patron saint of Oxchuk. Some Indians have gone to the church there to light a candle and ask for rain, and on their return the rains came. During an extended drought in August 1967, over one hundred people walked to Oxchuk to pray for rain. The people of Tzo'ontahal are somewhat bitter about the Oxchuqueños' neglect of Santo Tomás since over half of the town has converted to Protestantism. Whenever there is a drought, they blame it on the failure of the people of Oxchuk to take care of Santo Tomás.

In addition to the Catholic saints, the ancestor spirits help man to watch over the land. They are responsible for giving the rains in the planting period and early growing season. The fiesta on the Day of the Cross (Chapter 1) is primarily a plea for rain. Until the 1950s, the curers would hold a celebration at the Cave of the Ancestors to ask for rain during a drought. The waning belief in the presence of the ancestor spirits in the town has meant that there is less attention given to such fiestas. Some go to seek the ancestors in Chiapa de Corzo in the cave in which they are supposed to reside, as the following story illustrates:

One time my three brothers-in-law went to Chiapas to ask the ancestors for better crops. When they arrived there, nobody knew where the cave was. They said only a certain mayordomo there could find it.

Another time, two of the prayer-reciters went to the cave. They talked to the guard of the cave, saying, "May we speak to our ancestors?" The guard said, "Are you prepared? Did you bring two liters of trago? The ancestors like to drink."

The prayer-reciters went to get two liters of trago and all three drank it. While they were drinking, they saw a cow and chickens appear. The guardian said that if they came back in May with "food" for the ancestors —candles, incense, and firecrackers—they would get rich crops. I think the prayer-reciters succeeded because now they have a cow and chickens and a horse. They are afraid of the envy of their neighbors.

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608 members of the me?iltatil along with relatives and sometimes neigh-
571 bors. They are his sponsors at subsequent life crises—rituals of betrothal, marriage, and death. All of these people become co-parents to each other and to the child's parents. This relationship lasts throughout his and their lifetime. If the marriage bond is threatened, the me?iltatil gather to hear the complaints and try to resolve the problems. When a person dies, his me?iltatil go to his wake to watch over his spirit. He in turn is expected to help in the household of his me?iltatil when they have a ceremony by bringing wood or serving food and drink to guests.

624 2. Civil officials: The civil officials as a group may also be called
561 the me?iltatil; the term has special reference to the judges who represent the ancestors in their judgment of wrongdoers. In their passage through office from lower to higher positions, they are ranked in age-graded sets of junior officials (policemen), senior officials (regidores), and elder officials (judges), with the highest respect in ceremonial occasions accorded to the principales, two men, one from each side of the dual division, selected from those who have served in all offices. Drinking order, marching order, and seating order reflect the age-ordered rank in all ceremonial occasions.

[192] The link between the me?iltatil of the household and the me?iltatil
571 of the civil authority is provided by a group of officials called the *naka-*
621 *wanehetik*. These men are chosen from among bilaterally related
602 relatives, ritual co-parents, and neighbors who have served in office in
794 the church or the town hall and know the prayers. They direct cere-
608 monies in the house at times of baptism, betrothal, death, and when the household head enters a community office. They are the ones who know how the ancestors did things and "watch and see" that all is done in accord with custom. They instruct the new official in the prayers he
[574] must memorize. Their wives direct the preparation of food by the younger women, and one of them may serve as chief woman speaker greeting guests.

621 3. Curers: Curers are similarly ranked according to age and years
756 in practice. The elder curer on each side of the dual division is charged
561 with guarding his side against the intrusion of evil spirits in the form of his own animal spirit. It is in this function of guardianship that the curers are referred to as me?iltatil.

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844 house, and the men usually leave the scene. Women are ashamed of their husbands seeing the afterbirth because they joke about it with other men. [522] [833] (I do not know what the joking is about—possibly it is related to the frequency of sexual intercourse during pregnancy, since the placenta is believed to be increased by male sperm.)

There is no ceremony attending childbirth. Although some women are assisted by one female relative, most call in a midwife, who is referred to as "grandmother of the child" and who comes when the birth pangs [959] begin. There is only one recognized midwife in Tzo?ontahal; she is the sister of one of the practicing curers and a niece of one of the former leading curers of Alannantik. She has patients on both sides of the dual division. On rare occasions, caused by witchcraft the Indians believe, a woman [845] fails to give birth after two or three days of labor, and then a curer is [756] called in.

The child is delivered with the mother kneeling on the floor. The midwife cuts the umbilical cord with a knife, and the child's navel is tied with a cord. The child is wrapped in cloths which have been smoked over incense, and then a woman's sash is wrapped around him from shoulders to feet, firmly binding the arms and legs so that they cannot move. It is felt that if this is not done, the child will snatch at everything and eventually 846 become a thief. The body remains bound in this way for fifteen days. The umbilical cord and placenta are buried in the houseyard. Some say that a boy's umbilical cord may be tied in a tree "so that when the child grows, he can climb trees and cut fruit." The mother is given a drink of coffee, and the midwife binds her stomach with a band. Three days later the woman enters the sweatbath to cleanse herself. The midwife goes in with her and rubs her with branches of orange leaves and massages her stomach. If the child is born away from his own house, he is brought to it with great care so that his soul will not be dislodged from his body. The midwife makes a pad with branches of bushes growing near the springs, and the father sprays the child's body with springwater from his mouth.

[753] In the first "twenty days or one month" of life, the child's contacts with the world are limited to the immediate family in order to guard against soul-loss and illness from "hot" glances of outsiders. When anyone not of the household approaches the house in which there is a newborn child, he

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Chapter 6

Curing and the Curers

Sickness is a sign of upset relations between the spirits or people and those of relatives, neighbors, or places. In the curing ritual, the curers not only treat the disease, but also try to bring about spiritual readjustment by dramatizing the ill effects of animosity. Because they claim to be able to counteract witchcraft, the curers exercise a great deal of power. This power is limited by institutional requirements controlling entry into the profession and exercise of their skill and knowledge. The breakdown in the authority of elder curers during my study of the community, and their attempts to reinstate themselves, made explicit some of the structural principles of the institution.

The Curing Hierarchy

Recruitment into the hierarchy. Until the 1950s, each side of the dual division had an age-ranked order of curers and recognized the leadership of a single elder, called *statal ʔuʔul.* The older, more experienced curers, called the *b'ankilal,* or elder brothers, had authority over the novice curers, called the *ʔihtz'inal,* or younger brothers. With the breakdown of the hierarchy during my stay, this distinction was becoming less clear. In 1964 there were seven curers in Alannantik and six in Ahk'olnantik; on a return visit I made in 1967, their numbers had been reduced by homicide and exile to five in Alannantik and five in Ahk'olnantik.

Entry into the profession occurs during an epidemic when the civil authority calls upon the curers to gather in the town hall to determine who is bringing the "heat" that causes death from disease. The curers decide whether there are any promising young men who have the third soul, swayohel, which gives them the ability to cure. If a young man is deemed

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suitable, the president and judges give permission to the curers to allow him to enter the profession at this time. The novice provides three liters of liquor which are drunk "in common" by the curers and the civil officials.

There is some evidence that, formerly, novice curers were asked to yield the soul of one of their children:

My dead husband was given permission by Julian Gomez, the leader of the curers of Ahk'olnantik, to enter the curing profession. When my husband told me he wanted to cure, he said that Julian had asked him for a child "for the ancestors to eat." My husband was going to give a child of his brother since we didn't have any, but I said it would be a pity. Then he said he would give trago. This he did. I forget how many liters.

When the contagion came, the curers went to take out the heat. A policeman called my dead husband, and he went. The policeman said the leading curer had called him. The judges told him, "It is better for you to enter in common with the other curers."

He began to cure. The curers then asked what offering we were going to give.

"We have no children," said my husband. "We will give you liquor. I cannot give my brother's child or my sister's children."

He must have brought them about ten or twelve liters of trago and two packs of cigarettes.

The third soul, swayohel, may be acquired, or one may be born with it. Those who acquire the third soul by capture of the soul of a dead person within twenty days after the death are considered to be potentially dangerous. They are more likely to use the soul for evil than those who have acquired it from the ancestors at birth. Swayoheles can be acquired from a saint named ʔAhau in the neighboring town of Oxchuk.[1] The following account illustrates how one asks this saint for a swayohel:

If you go to the saint with a black face named ʔAhau with two candles of twenty cents you can ask for a swayohel. You say, "I want one č'ulel that is very strong. I have an enemy. I need one." You sleep there, and wake

1. Lombardo Ozero (1944:73) says that in Oxchuk, Mukulajau, or Chulajau, is identified with Trinidad, and is associated with the pigeon, which is the animal spirit of powerful curers.

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up with a swayohel. One man near San Vicente said his friend went there to ask for one. Next day, the enemy died. One man who went there said when he woke up he was sure he had gained a swayohel. He had dreamed of two animals. "Are they my swayoheles?" he asked. They were jaguars.

When he got to his house, the same two animals came. They thought about how to get his enemies. But when the jaguars had killed his enemies, they were not content. Then they went on to kill many people. Finally the man was shot. The spirits of all those who die as a result of a swayohel received from ?Ahau go to him after their death.

Curers are classified as potentially good or dangerous on the basis of what kind of swayohel they have. Good curers have swayoheles of animals which eat leaves or grass—horses, sheep, bulls, or other herbivorous animals. Potentially dangerous curers have the souls of carnivorous animals —vultures, dogs, cats, mountain lions, coyote, and others. They may not use these swayoheles for evil, but possession of such a soul is a basis for suspicion. Usually the curers keep secret the nature of their swayohel, but sometimes when they are drunk they brag about its power. Good swayoheles fly or walk straight down the main roads of the town, while evil swayoheles lurk at the outskirts of the settled area.

Only one woman has a swayohel and practices curing. She is reputed to have acquired her swayohel in the following manner:

There was a woman named Andrea Ča?il and another named Fernanda Ča?il. They were not sisters, but they were of the Ča?iletik. Fernanda died. She was a true elder woman, a very strong woman. She lived in Madronal and Andrea lived in the center.

One day Andrea said, "Let us go collect wood," to two girls.

"Let's go," said the girls. "Where shall we get the wood?"

"Let's go in the woods behind Madronal," replied Andrea. "Let's go."

The women arrived in the mountain to cut wood. When they had the wood, Andrea said she saw a mulberry bush. "Let us eat some berries," she said.

Andrea went to the mulberry bush. She saw a white ball of Čišol under the bush. "What kind of an animal is that?" she asked.

The girls looked at it and said, "We don't know."

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756 159 562 *Andrea told them to go and eat the mulberries and she would see what kind of an animal it was. The animal said, "Come here." But when they got there, there was no animal.*

In two or four days, people asked them, "What kind of an animal did you see?"

"It was a dog that we saw. Not a real dog, but the soul of the dead Fernanda. Andrea caught it," the girls said.

"Did you truly see where it was?" the people asked.

"I caught it," said Andrea.

"Why did you catch it," the girls asked.

"I caught it because it is a pity it died. Since there is no one to take it, I grabbed it because it made me sad that she [Fernanda] died."

Now Andrea is a me? u?ul [woman curer]. She fights sickness because she has this extra soul.

756 Ordinarily, soul-catching is dangerous since it is sezure of power which has not been granted at birth by the me?iltatil. Andrea, however, has never been accused of doing harm, and people emphasize that she did it out of sympathy for her dead kinswoman.

756 578 [754] There is some sentiment that curers should not enter too young into the curing profession. If they do, they should be extremely deferential to the elder curers, and not claim greater powers. The informant quoted above concerning the initiation of her husband into the curing profession maintains that the older curers did not support her husband when he was accused as a witch because of jealousy of his youth.

159 756 578 683 *My husband was very young when he entered curing. He had gone to cure in the house of a man living near Domingo [his enemy]. Domingo saw him come out drunk. He had a companion, Lorenzo. About eight people gathered. They put a nail in his jaws. He lived three nights. He told me who did it. I went to the cabildo with my father. They got many witnesses to deny they had been near. It was during the fiesta of Carnival.*

My father and I spoke with the authorities in Las Casas. But nothing was done. I did not know how to speak well in Spanish; I went and spoke to Domingo. He told me, "It was your husband's own fault."

"What crime did he have?" I asked.

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"He looked for trouble!" Domingo replied.
I said, "You killed my husband!"
He said, "It was not I! It was not I!"
It doesn't serve to enter curing early. People will kill you right away. Another young man wanted to enter. The curers did not permit him since they said he was a witch. People heard he was a witch, and they killed him. He was the same age as my husband [*about twenty-seven*].

The curers who have survived to an old age were introduced into the profession by an elder relative. They choose their clients carefully, refusing to cure a man who is on the point of death, and remaining within their own section of the dual division. These rules of survival are ignored by some of the younger men who wish to impress their elders with their powers.

The changing image of the curers. The curers of today are unfavorably compared with those of the past who used their power for good. The prototype of the old curer was the fearful Tatik Ča'uk, Lord of the Lightning, possibly a local manifestation of the Maya god Chac.[2] The dialectic of power is exemplified in his control over beneficial and destructive forces. His beneficence is demonstrated in his ability to bring rain to crops, while his vengeance is revealed in lightning bolts which can kill people and destroy houses. Anyone who is struck by lightning is believed to have had some sin for which the Tatik Ča'uk has punished him. His destructive force is equated with a rifle—called "the elder brother of the Lord of Lightning"—and with the "heat" which brings death in illnesses. His habitation is believed to be the Cave of the Star where the heat which causes epidemics is found.

The curers were intermediaries for the Tatik Ča'uk in their control over both destructive and beneficial forces. Formerly, the swayohel of the curers patrolled the streets of the town to prevent the entry of evildoers bringing heat. It is in this role that they are referred to as me'iltatil. If an epidemic occurred, the two leading curers from each side of the town con-

2. In other Tzeltal- and Tzotzil-speaking communities, the god Ča'uk is named as the chief figure from pre-Conquest theology (Hermitte 1964, Holland 1963:93).

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sulted with each other to determine who was bringing in the heat. They privately disposed of the evil by causing the evildoer to die of an illness. At the time of my stay, suspicion of the curers meant that a public hearing was held in the town hall to determine who the guilty person was; usually one of the curers themselves was suspected (Chapter 9).

The curers formerly demonstrated their beneficial power by bringing rain during a fiesta held in the cave of the ancestors. This is described by an informant:

When the pueblo lacked rain in the growing season of corn in May and June, the leading curers went with the other curers, the fiscal, the alfereces, the mayordomos, and the women prayer-reciters to the cave. All the women carried candles of a peso or fifty-cent size and incense burners. They drank a great deal of liquor at the mouth of the cave and then entered to dance. The mayordomos played the guitar, the drum, and flute as the women danced and the curers prayed to the me?tiktatik. There used to be a spring in this cave, people say, and the ancestors granted water from it when they were given a fiesta.

The last fiesta for rain occurred about 1950. The whole town contributed two pesos for the liquor and candles. The leading curer then was Juliano, a man recognized for his powers in curing and in bringing rain. He told the people that he spoke to the me?tiktatik who, he said, were dressed in the old style [a shirt worn over short cotton pants still used by older men of the town, and the handwoven hat worn by alfereces today]. The curers told the people that it would rain, and the afternoon of the fiesta, it came down hard.

There is no longer faith that the ancestors live in the cave, nor that the present curers could speak to them if they did.

The growing discontent with the curers, the suspicion that they are responsible for much of the witchcraft, is reflected in the account of an older informant.

The curer O. K. told me that the curers ate the spirits of sick people who were going to die. The sick people would come to ask the curers for

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medicine. But why should they ask for medicine if the curers were going to eat their souls as he told me? I asked him, "How do you eat their souls?" He said that the five or six curers would make a common meal. They looked for a frying pan, and when it was well cooked, they would call all the curers and say, "Come, let us eat in common." When people came to ask for medicine, they would say, "Please, give us medicine." The curers would give the medicine, but the sick ones did not get well. The curers were only deceiving them. How could they get well if they wanted to eat their souls? They only wasted their money.

It is this that O. K. said to me. He told me himself that he had eaten the souls. Then I felt that he was bad because of what he himself had told me. To this day, I believe that he himself did the evil to his patients.

The personality of the curer. In view of the hazards of entering the curing profession and the low material rewards, the question of what motivates a curer to practice is of some interest. The older curers claim that God spoke to them in a dream and made known His desire that they cure. They conceive of it as a responsibility to the people, and maintain that their power comes from God. This contradicts parallel statements made by the same curers that their power comes from their swayohel. The younger curers say that the curers of their side selected them because they saw that they had a swayohel.

Direct questioning yields only limited understanding of what motivates these extraordinary people. The behavior of some of the curers reveals facets of the role which could not be elicited from them in questioning. Curers are able to defy tenets of the moral code of the community which stress softness and slowness, a moderation which is fundamentally based on fear of the world of spirits and of men. When drunk, the curers brag about their strength and fearlessness. They try to avoid the usual negative sanctions to such behavior by asserting the strength of their swayoheles and their imperviousness to harm.

My elder brother Albino was drinking with the dead Nicolás, leader of the curers of Alannantik. When both were half drunk, my elder brother asked Niholás what swayohel he had.

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159 756 *"You won't be afraid if I show it?" Nicolás asked. He then flipped his kotonču four times and a black bull appeared. It disappeared, and they drank some more. Nicolás made the bull appear again.*

Nicolás was ejido commissioner when I was president. We began to talk one day in the cabildo. "Who is the strongest of all the curers?" we asked. One said that now it was the elder brother Nicolás.

Čiko turned to Nico and said, "Tell us who is the strongest of all who know curing." Nico replied, "Ah, you want to hear. There is no one who is strong as the dead Mamal Komesil [elder Gomez] and I." Čiko said, "Mam D. is good."

"Less so," said Nico. "One time we tested it. I took out a sheep and a black dog. He [D.] took out a goat and a pig, and we ordered the animals to run. And I saw that the swayohel of D. could not run. Mine ran well, and his couldn't arrive before mine. It was then that I saw he was not as strong."

541 756 Formerly, when bullfights were held in the town as a feature of the fiesta of Santiago, curers took the great risk of riding the backs of the bulls to demonstrate their bravery. The fight became a symbolic defiance of culturally instilled fears. The fights are organized in this fashion: one man mounts the bull which has no saddle, bridle, or grip of any kind. His feet are tied under the belly of the bull, which increases the hazard if he is thrown since he can easily be dragged under the hooves of the bull. A man stands with a cape before the bull, trying to unseat his opponent. The curer Minko regularly entered the fights as a rider. He drank copiously before mounting the bull. He himself would try to goad the bull into jumping by leaning backward and biting its tail or kicking its sides. People rated even more highly than Minko's performance that of another curer, Bon, who, they said, never even shook when he climbed onto the bull as did Minko. They realized that Minko needed the liquor to face the threat of being crushed by the hooves of the bull, but that Bon was beyond fear. In these displays of fearlessness, some of the curers enjoy a sense of power and freedom from the inhibitions conditioning the behavior of ordinary men.

756 178 578 Competition and the assertion of power among the younger curers is

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symptomatic of the present breakdown in the hierarchical controls which formerly maintained the authority of elder curers. Informants say that in the old days there was no such competition, and the leadership of the elder curers was unchallenged.

Another clue to the personality of the curer can be seen in the statement of a young curer, who expressed in a kind of stream-of-consciousness style the fears and worries that plague him. After responding to the questioning about what he did when he cured, he proceeded to talk of his own concerns as he cured patients:

And when I arrive at Pahaltón [curing spring], I set aside my hat and blanket so that they do not get burned. If a dog should come and chew my sandals or if I should leave them outside the house where I am curing and a house rat chews them, then it will cost me thirty pesos to buy a new pair. When I come out late at night, a cat spirit sometimes appears on the road, and I throw a stone at it so it will not carry off my spirit; or a dog comes and I must beat him with my hand because I have no machete with me, or I must throw a broken bottle at the devil. When I get home, I take off my jacket and hat and go to sleep. My woman must tie up the sandals with a string on the rafters so that the rat will not eat them. Then it is the woman's fault if the devil dog gets them.

Late at night the spirits of the curers come to play and go at cock's crow. And at two o'clock the spirit of a sheep comes out with the devil, and these spirits do not go to sleep in their house until dawn. And if they [the curers' spirits] arrive in bed drunk and take off their huaraches and bother their wife she will put them in prison and then they have to pay a fine of two liters of the "gift" [liquor] and one handful of cigarettes. If their woman leaves the curers and they come out of prison, then if they do the same thing again, they send then to Santo Domingo. In prison they make net bags and if they have a wife, she goes and gives them tortillas and coffee. If their wife or father and mother help and give money, then they can pay for a lawyer and get out. Or if they have a daughter, then they receive the gift of a suitor and eat the bread.[3] *Later there will come the chicken and sweet liquor and trago, and then she will marry. Later*

3. "Eating the bread" signifies that the betrothal negotiations are accepted.

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they will go to the church wedding. The parents of the couple embrace the godparents. They go dance in the house.

The paranoic fantasies of this young curer, a man in his early thirties, characterize the world of fears, both real and demonic, which the curers sometimes manipulate and by which they are sometimes victimized. The young curers in their thirties and forties tend to have more domestic disputes than most men in town. Emilio, a man in his forties who has been trying to assert his stature as leading curer of Alannantik since his predecessor was killed for witchcraft, was deserted by his wife. She fled to a neighbor's house. In a drunken rage, he tried to burn it to the ground. When his attempt failed, he threatened to bring "heat" from the Cave of the Star to cause an epidemic after which, he said, he would "eat the souls of the children by the dozen." In the line of duty, curers are often required to get drunk, and drunkenness loosens the cautions which control behavior. Gloating in the power of their swayoheles, there seems to be no limit to the threats or acts they commit. While drinking has probably always been part of curing ceremonies, the behavior noted in the cases described seems to be a response to the growing insecurity on the part of the curers about their status.

The curer reveals in his speech and acts the motivation of power. In Tzo?ontahal, power means freedom from one's own fears as well as from the human and supernatural sanctions imposed on those who ignore the norms governing behavior. The proof of his power lies in the ability to inspire fear in others. For this reason, the curer brags of the evil deeds he has committed or is capable of doing, even though this may bring about his own destruction.

Curing Behavior

In their role as "doctors" for the individual patient, curers are referred to as *?u?ul* and are addressed with the honorific title *tatín*. Despite the declining belief in their guardianship function, there has been a retention of belief in their power to overcome witchcraft. Only the curer, because he possesses a swayohel, can deal with illness caused by witchcraft. Even if

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the curer is a potentially dangerous witch, he can be persuaded to fight the evil power of another. One of the most dangerous and powerful witches, until he was killed five years ago, was a man who boasted as he was curing a patient, "The evil [pukuh] in me will win over that of the witch!"

Curing behavior is classified in Tzeltal according to five major schema: (1) pulsing (*pikel č'ič*), (2) drawing out the evil (*slok'es ?ak'čamel*), (3) calling the soul (*tamohel*), (4) medicating the illness (*poltawane camel*, and (5) medicating the house (*poltawane na*). Each behavioral schema represents the highest level of a behavioral taxonomy which includes discrete actions described below.

Pulsing. The course of the cure for all illnesses is set in motion by the diagnosis through pulsing Throughout the cure, pulsing is performed to gauge the effectiveness of each step. The curer is chosen on the basis of his ability to pulse; when anyone is asked why a curer was chosen, the consistent answer is, "He knows how to pulse." The significance of the curer's ability to pulse is related to the fact that the first level of contrast establishing a taxonomy of diseases is that between "evil" and "good" determined by pulsing. The essence of the pulsing is a diagnosis of the patient's social relationships. It is a kind of exploratory "sociopsy" comparable to the stage of biopsy in modern medicine, resting on a notion that the witch "leaves his signature in the blood." and the curer "hears/feels" it. He does this by placing his thumb over the pulse at the wrist, inner elbow, and sometimes the inner knee joint and temples. The logic is that the blood passes from the heart and "talks" at the pulse points, revealing the condition and needs of the heart. The blood of the curer enters into communication with that of the patient when he holds his own thumb pulse against the patient's pulse. He does not look for the physiological symptoms on which modern medicine bases diagnosis, but for what the blood tells about the patient's relations with people in his social environment and for what the heart needs. Disease symptomology, such as fever and locus of pain, provides the basis for assigning medicines at a later stage in the cure.

Some curers use thirteen candles set before the curing arch to corroborate diagnoses made in the pulsing: if, for example, the candles bend in-

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The companions of the patient
are gathered here with his father
In the center of this other holy
earth
Holy earth, take out the fever.

The curer then calls upon each of the saints of the surrounding towns, asking for help in bringing about a miracle. First he calls upon the major saints of the pueblo (Santa Lucía, San Francisco, Santiago, San Pedro the Martyr, and the Virgen de Rosario), then those of Teopisca (San Augustín and the Virgen de Mercedes), of San Cristóbal (San Cristóbal and Justo Juez), of Villa Carranza (Señor del Pozo and San Bartolo), of Socoltenango (the Virgen de Candelaria), of Villa las Rosas (San Miguel and San José), of Comitán (Santo Domingo, San Caralampio, and the Virgen de Santa Teresa), and finally Señor Esquipulas of Tulanca. Thus he defines the meaningful spiritual universe of the village, building a kind of hegemony of defense and protection.

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At any point throughout the cure the patient may consult the doctor sent by the I.N.I., the priest, or the schoolteacher, all of whom compete with each other in gaining clients by dispensing medicines. This does not undermine the role of the curer since curing the disease is considered a separate issue from stopping the witchcraft which is causing it. The disease may be cured, but the persistence of the witchcraft will eventually cause death through spiritual malaise unless treated by the curer.

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All the people of the village know the common herbs and the sicknesses for which they should be used. The basis for the curer's power thus is not specialized knowledge of medicines, but the strength of his swayohel in fighting that of the enemy, and his esoteric knowledge of pulsing.

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Formerly curers received minimal pay for practicing. The family of the patient offered about 20 pesos or worked in the fields of the curer. Curers refused larger payments because they said their skill came from God, and it would be a sin to accept money for it. This practice is continued today by one old curer for patients within the community. However, he receives from 100 to 200 pesos from out-of-town patients. A Ladina from the neigh-

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boring community who is reputed to practice both witchcraft and curing receives fees of 200 to 300 pesos regularly. She has been accused of killing more than one patient in giving injections.

Since most diseases are not static conditions, a master classification must take into account physiological process. The only absolutely evil diseases are those which are found to be incurable. When diseases which start out as apparently "good," or not caused by evil intent, fail to respond to patent medicines, the patient or his family begin to suspect witchcraft. They then turn to the curer who will diagnose this. Category 1 of Table 22 includes those diseases which, depending on duration and intensity, indicate the presence of evil.

In the case of the illnesses of God, Category 3 of Table 22, an additional complication enters. As in the case of Category 1 diseases, they may begin as "good" diseases, but the introduction of evil by a witch means that the illness can cause death to many people. This category includes the contagious diseases, the most common ones being measles, whooping cough, and heat, which may refer to typhoid, grippe, or to an increase in the virulence of other contagious diseases.

The designation "sickness of God" is one inspired by the priest. He has been active in trying to discourage witch-killing and has insisted that the contagious diseases are sent by God. The villagers have accepted this as far as the origin of the disease is concerned, but as the deaths mount, people begin to suspect witchcraft.

Sudden attacks causing almost immediate death are classified as judgments of the ancestors rather than as illness. These include "seizure, because the very cold leg and arm of the ancestors touch the body [of the victim]" and "ancestors grab the soul." Asphyxiation and heart attack may be some of the modern classifications for such diseases. If a child should die suddenly, the logic applied in Tzo?ontahal is that the *me?iltatil kananatay lum*, the mother-father ancestors who care for earth, see a potential danger in the soul of the child and seize it so that he will not develop into a witch. These are the only deaths I know of which are not attributed to witchcraft.

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Sometimes a colicky baby may become the focus of a curing ceremony designed to "cure" the conflict between husband and wife. In one case, the parents of a healthy young wife separated from her husband staged a curing ceremony to dramatize her marital plight to the in-laws.

The breakdown of the curing hierarchy and the recruitment procedures which were maintained by the elder leaders (see Chapter 10) has led to a reevaluation of the role of the curers in the community. They have lost their position as me'iltatil representing the ancestors who guard over the community. Curers are increasingly being accused of sorcery, and over ten of them have been killed in the past decade as witches (Nash, J. 1967). Paradoxically, it is the belief in their evil power which leads to their persisting role in the society. Clients feel that the more evil the curer is, the more able he is to combat evil. In a community dominated by belief in witchcraft, they are both feared and valued for their ability to control it. From a position as arbiters of morality, they have become the chief targets as deviants from the moral code. Despite the loss of confidence in curers as guardians, they are still called upon to fight the evil of witchcraft, and nearly every day a ritual is performed. The regimen of the curing ritual has not been upset by the undermining of the curers' position. Tied to a diagnostic system emphasizing the state of the patient's social relations, the same procedures are carried out even when modern medicines are used.

In curing practices, the Indian sees himself as the key figure in the drama of his own self-victimization. His illnesses come from within his own world, usually from within his family or close neighborhood. They are a mark of guilt for having excited the envy or hatred of associates. While the Indian is often portrayed in the role of passive victim to outside domination, in his own self-projection he sees himself dominated by powers within the community. Greater participation and equality in the wider society may in the future release him from these fear-provoking figures in his own environment.

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Plate 8. Women of a household and their helpers grinding corn and making tortillas with a press in preparation for a house ceremony. They are all dressed in the traditional costume. Most of such food preparation is done inside the house except at the time of large festivals. Photograph by Marcey Jacobson.

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Plate 9. Curer sitting next to the center post where he has just arranged the candles and branches of spring bushes in preparation for the house fiesta. The basket contains the protective crosses, bound with palm fronds, which he will nail on the house posts. The basin contains springwater, and the gourd in the foreground contains the powdered medicines which will be added to the water and drunk. Photograph by Marcey Jacobson.

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796 tions betray the intent. As he is hauled up by ropes and hung from the
182 bell tower "to show the world that he killed Christ," the mayordomos on
829 the ground who are assisting those up in the bell tower jab him with long poles. In this horseplay they symbolically castrate him: I heard one mayordomo say, *"Me?ɬunun,"* (transvestite) as one well-directed blow struck Judas. On Saturday, he is let down and given a ride on horseback around town. Formerly riding a horse was the prerogative only of Ladinos in the department of San Cristóbal Las Casas (Colby and Van den Berghe 1961). Placing Judas on a horse possibly has a symbolic value in identifying him as one of the hated dominant group who asserted this privilege.
[794] As he rides around town, the mayordomos solicit gifts from the people.
[756] Everyone gives fruits except the curers, who donate money. This transac-
[754] tion may indicate an obligation they feel toward Judas as one source of their power over witchcraft-derived illnesses. The money is used to buy liquor, called the "washing of the arms and legs of our Lord Eskipulas." The drinking is mandatory for all the mayordomos who have participated in the hanging of Judas.

The Judas figure, which was the church's symbol of the hated Semite, is made to appear as the enemy of the Indians, the Ladino. He symbolizes the sexual license of Ladinos with Indian women, the oppression of Indians by Ladinos, and the killer of Christ. In retaliation, the Indian symbolically castrate and hang him, and finally burn his body, thus dramati-
[793] cally vanquishing the alien in their midst. So far as I know, the priest is unaware of the identification Indians make between the Jew and the Ladino. He prevented the ride from taking place the year I witnessed the Easter Week ceremonial on grounds that it was a pagan ritual; when he left town on Sunday, the mayordomos took Judas on his customary rounds.

796 The attitude toward Jesus, as the hero of the morality play, is ambiva-
796 lent. Martyrdom is not the way to win in Indian society. The feeling is
182 that power goes to the one who makes the sacrifice, and since Jesus was a
829 Ladino sacrifice, they have more power than the Indians. During the
[181] Caste War in Chiapas in 1868, the Indians crucified an Indian youth in
[782] the hope that they would find a savior as powerful as Jesus. To this day,
[795] Indians of To?ontahal seem not to identify Jesus as one of themselves,

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Chapter 9

The Competition for Power

829 Changes in the organization of the civil and religious hierarchies since the
178 constitution of 1927 can be traced in a series of events remembered by
177 members of the community. Their selection of significant events and the interpretation they make of them give the best clues to their response to change. In the remembrance of things past people structure their world and project expectations for the future. Behavior in these events lacks the controls operating in the formal rituals of the officials—age-graded authority, hierarchy, and a code of behavior which conceals the open show of power. The strategies employed in these organizational changes reveal other rules or transformation of the old rules characterizing social interaction.

554 The structure of roles in the civil and religious hierarchies has remained
621 intact. What has changed are the bases for according prestige and author-
794 ity and allocating roles. The pivotal positions in which change is occurring
578 are the mediating roles between local and national power structures, spe-
177 cifically those of president and secretary in the civil authority and of fiscal
178 and priest in the religious authority.

The contest for power and "control of the town" has centered in five
[212] blocks of competition: (1) the opposition of new young leaders with skills
[191] in speaking Spanish, literacy, and knowledge of the idiom of behavior in
[756] the national culture to the established succession of an age-dominated authority system; (2) the challenge by the civil authority to the control of the curers who rely on power derived from possession of an animal spirit; (3) the struggle for political power among factions based on new economic enterprises; (4) the contest among local caciques for domination; and (5) the conflict among religious functionaries. The series of events in which these contests have crystallized and brought about a reorganization

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The belief in power derived from animal spirits was probably influenced by the Toltec belief in nahualism, or transformation of people after death into animals (Calnek 1962:22). The Toltec belief originated in the period of Mexican influence but had many local indigenous manifestations (Foster 1944). The integration of the two systems of power was brought about by calendar priests controlling the distribution of animal spirits (Calnek 1962:19). The degree of retention of calendrical knowledge and of belief in witchcraft gives us one of the best indices of acculturation in the area.[2] In Tzo?ontahal there is no remnant of calendar divination for ceremonial or predictive use. However, witchcraft based on belief in animal spirits continues to be an important factor in the contest for power. The technique of secrecy, of presenting a united front in the face of attempts by the outside Ladinos to tamper with the local social control system, persists to this day in the town.

An endemic problem in communities dominated by belief in witchcraft is control over the evil power of witches. The traditional control system in Tzo?ontahal operated through the guardianship of three sets of powerholders who checked up on each other: the ancestors, the curers, and the judges. The guardianship of the ancestors consisted in preventing any child possessed of a swayohel from the devil from growing up to abuse his power and in keeping any evil spirits from entering the town. The curers,

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the Indians, whether out of cowardice or deceit, withdraw their accusation or claims, so that it is impossible to convict the evildoers for punishment; and for lack of sufficient proof they cannot be punished, or if there is enough basis to put them in prison, they sometimes disappear and flee to another jurisdiction and hide, denying their place of origin or changing their name.

2. In Oxchuk, calendar experts with the ability to divine the future still set the days for carrying out Catholic fiestas according to the twenty-day Maya ceremonial cycle. Each of the spirits symbolizing the twenty days wielded the power of good or evil. This provided the basis for predicting. When Villa Rojas studied the town in the 1940s, elders of patrilineal lineages controlled the behavior of members by causing sickness brought by their *lab*, or animal spirit (Villa Rojas 1947). In San Pedro Chenalhó, the principales exercise power through their *wayhel*, or animal spirit (Guiteras Holmes 1961). Nahuales of leaders of the patrilineages and principales are feared and respected in Larraínzar, although there is a growing discontent with their oppressive control (Holland 1963). Men believed to have thirteen nahuales figure as guardians and avengers for individuals in Pinola society, although the Indians of this community no longer have a hierarchy of civil offices through which their prestige can be publicly validated (Hermitte 1964).

as the direct agents of the ancestors, guarded the streets of their own side of the dual division. The judges, with the supervision of the principales, were responsible for guarding against the abuse of power by the curers or others possessing a swayohel in their review of witchcraft cases in the town hall. The three sets of functionaries—ancestors, curers, and judges—are classified in a lexicon of role function in the stem *me? . . tat . . ,* common to the terms applied to them, me?tiktatik, me?iltatil, and me?eštateš.[3]

The system of control over the use of power has been in a state of uneasy tension. In a series of incidents recounted below, the growing suspicion that the judges and the principales were not countering the witches because of their fear of falling victim to them, and that the curers themselves were exercising the witchcraft becomes apparent.

In the following case, the system of checks and balances was upset by the entry into the presidency in 1940 of Mam Nicolás, the leading curer of Allannantik. Nicolás combined the skills of operating in the traditional culture with those of dealing with the Ladino world. Despite the fact that he was a graduate of the boarding school operating in the town in the 1930s, which had far more extensive effects in acculturation as well as formal education than any prior school, he practiced curing. The case is recounted by Ceferino, the scribe:

Formerly the dead president Mam Nicolás left at midday from the town hall and went to his house where he ate a meal. A neighbor, Francisco, came to talk to him. They drank a half a liter of trago, and then began to drink a second and got drunk. They began to say goodbye, and Francisco left Nicolás' house. When Nicolás saw that Francisco went out, he grabbed his shotgun. He saw that Francisco was now far away, and he fired many shots. One got him right in his back. When Francisco felt it, he shouted. The police heard him and went to get the judges who came to see also. His [Francisco's] wife came. She raised his head and cried when she saw he was dead. An elder sister brought a new mat to carry him.

3. The suffixes *-ik* and *-tik* refer to pronominal forms, as in "you judges" and "our ancestors." *-il* is an article, as in "the curers." In prayer, the ancestors may be addressed in the second person, or the judges may be referred to with the first-person-plural possessive, but these forms are rare in those contexts.

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Eight men of Alannantik wanted the interim president, Simón to remain as president. But the people of Ahk'olnantik did not want him to remain as president. The townspeople began to talk, saying, "Why should he remain as president since he stole twenty bulls? We don't want him. Let us get another president. We shall walk with Ceferino."

They wanted me for president since I was first regidor. It is for this reason that I entered as president, but I didn't think that I would be able to stay on as president. Simón received an order from the [state] government that he should return as president. He came with soldiers, and when they took me out of office, the lieutenant said to Simón, "Now you enter."

And so I gave over the archives and seals and everything in the presidency to Simón, and I left the presidency. And the people saw that it was the order of the government, and they did not say anything. The town remained silent.

The incident is given as it was related to me in Tzeltal. I have sorted out the steps in which the conflict developed in order to clarify its meaning.

1. The traditional checks and balance system of the civil authority over the curers was initially upset by the entry of a leading curer into the post of president.
2. When he committed a murder while in office, the judges seized control and had him put in prison.
3. His replacement by the síndico who was from the same side of the dual division, aroused the opposition of the people of the opposite side, Ahk'olmantik, who believed that the epidemic, which followed the president's removal from power, was caused by the curers of Alannantik under the direction of the president who was in jail.
4. The leaders of the reyolt in Ahk'olnantik chose as their replacement the first regidor, Ceferino, who was from their side.
5. Leaders from Alannantik rejected this replacement and were able to get official backing from the state government to replace their representative.

The process illustrates the way in which a conflict, precipitated by a clash between civil authorities and the curers, was cast into the idiom of struc-

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tural opposition between the two sides of the dual division. In this case, resolution came with the intercession of federal troops.

When curing was a controlled profession, with a hierarchy legitimizing entry and exit, the power of the curers was directed toward guarding the village against evil as well as curing. In the 1940s, the loss of one leader by death and the other's jail sentence meant loss of control over entry into the profession. A growing suspicion and discontent with the curers as a group, laying upon them the responsibility of much of the witchcraft, is reflected in the account of another older informant:

> *Formerly when the curers J. C., A. A., S. K., and J. D. were alive, they walked in common. The people were in accord with the curers because they watched over the peublo. They knew about medicine, and so people of Alannantik went to ask them favors to cure them and also the people of Ahk'olnantik went to ask them favors.*
>
> *But then, after they died [about 1940], the principales did not dare fight the curers because they had animal spirits, and the principales themselves didn't—they were just honorable people.*

The doubt about the civil authority's control over the curers has increased since young leaders have taken the leadership in the town. One informant said, "When there are young people in the cabildo, they can't keep control of the curers, but the old people in the cabildo can." With the relaxation of restrictions on entry into the curing profession, following the loss of leadership and the ranked hierarchy, curers were no longer restrained by professional standards. When drunk, they bragged of their power to do evil as well as to do good. The first killing of a curer accused of being a witch occurred in 1937. He was working in Pinola when he was shot. The dead curer's widow wanted to bring his body back to be buried in the town cemetery, but the request was refused by the judges. This suggests that the town authorities agreed with the accusation, since it is the custom to return the dead to the town for burial. Other assassinations by individuals occurred in 1943 and in 1950. During this period, the civil officials sanctioned the assassinations of persons accused and convicted of witchcraft. When someone wished to kill a man suspected of witchcraft, they would go to the town hall and ask for permission. After a re-

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view of the case by the judges and the other civil authorities, the president would have the suspected witch locked up in the local jail and then give the key to his enemy. The following story illustrates this procedure:

When we were still part of the township of Teopisca [sometime before 1931] F. went and asked permission of the authorities to kill his enemy, a curer, whom he thought was bewitching his brother-in-law. The president arrived at the house of the suspected witch with the order to imprison him. He said that they were going to Teopisca to put him in jail. The group of authorities set off with the suspected witch. On the way another group met them and asked them where they were going. The President replied, "To Teopisca." The group which had encountered them asked them if they would like a drink to "heat their body." They gave one cup and then another. They then cut up the suspected witch with a machete and put his body in the cave of me?tiktatik that goes to Chiapa de Corzo. When the widow enquired the next day where her husband was, the president said that the man must have gone to the finca.

After telling this story, my informant concluded, "Therefore, little by little, the pueblo is getting better because we scared the curers with the permission of the president to kill them." He felt that this was the point at which the power of the curers, who were more and more frequently being accused as witches, was broken.

While the usual course of action, once a man was accused of witchcraft, was to kill him so that there would be no danger of revenge, the following case illustrates punishment by beating.

The time was 1935. There was a very bad curer who stole much cattle. One man who heard that he had stolen his cattle wanted to kill him, but the curer met the man and killed him in an old house. The town authorities seized the curer and forced him to pay one thousand pesos for the bull. The principales punished him by tying him to a tree and beating him five or six times. They beat him well for the town. After they beat him they brought him to prison in San Cristóbal and gave him over to the Ministerio Publico to arrange the case. He did not return to the pueblo but went to another place. In five years he returned to his pueblo.

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756 627 *When he arrived here, he did not hear any word that they would kill him. He persisted in his custom of stealing. And the pueblo seized him and put him in prison. The whole town seized him although he had heard no word.*

They tied him to a tree and said to him, "You do not have shame. You are a curer, father of the pueblo, [respect term for curer], and yet you behaved badly and truly stole. The town sees you are a bad man, Emilio. They call you their father, but now I am going to tell you that you ought not to be called father. You're a bad one."

He wanted to be called father, but he was only a bad one. He returned again to San Cristóbal because of two crimes. He did not hear the words. He remained in prison, and when he came out someone else came and killed him.

756 682 178 Since 1938, nine of the thirty-seven homicide cases on which I collected data (Table 29) were killings of curers. The increasing frequency of such killings reveals the loss of faith in the guardianship role of the curers, but along with this, retention of belief in their power to work evil.

731 756 754 627 621 In the series of successful confrontations, the civil authority has gained strength and overcome some of the fear of the people. In May 1964, during a severe contagion of measles, a rumor started that the disease was being spread because of witchcraft. The president called together the curers. The consensus of this gathering was that a certain curer of Alannantik had buried the "heat" which was causing the deaths in the milpa of his enemy. The people of Alannantik gathered with the curers and the civil officials in the milpa of the "enemy" to dig it out. The curers dug out a charcoal brazier which is the sign of illness and threw it in the Cave of the Star. [683] That evening the suspected witch was killed, presumably by his neighbors.

756 621 627 754 In the most recent confrontation between the civil authorities and an individual curer, in March 1966, the civil authorities showed a united front in denouncing the use of witchcraft to threaten any official. The entire group of practicing curers from both sides of the dual division were called to witness the denunciation before the assembled civil officials in the town hall. The only one absent was the curer accused of attempting to cut short the life of the president because of envy of his position. The assembled

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group walked to the hill where the curer had been reported practicing his witchcraft. There they collected the evidence: fourteen candles of all colors, crosses of wire placed on a photograph, and a gourd. The curers present lifted the evidence and threw it in the river to get rid of the evil. A transcription of the proceedings in the town hall is given below:

President: "We are gathered together here because something which is not good has happened. See here, Tatinel [*to the leading curer*], *we do not know if it is witchcraft or not."*

First Curer Feliciano, of Yetawitz: "The old men [*elder curers*] *have pulsed our children. All the pueblo has helped. We have just brought in the candles. He is a very bad witch. We walked out there and we found it. For this we have gathered together, but if there is an owner of the witchcraft, we have not heard."*

Second Curer Emilio, of Alannantik: "But this owner is not good. Thus spoke my compadre. This is not good. So my compadre and Mam Pelise [*Feliciano, first curer to speak*] *have spoken. Whoever did it has not advised us. The ancestors did not want this. Now who wants it? Who speaks with the holy word? You do not announce whether it is a curer or whether it is or not. We do not know where it is or what it is that he did. But when someone does give an illness, it is a good custom to see where this comes from. This we do not know. It is for this we went to the cave to know where he found it."*

President: "Therefore we had to look for it and see who did it; whether it is someone who knows how to do both witchcraft and curing. But he will pay here in the presidency for what he did, because we are going to announce it, we are going to reveal the crime. Now your hearts are content and truly you cannot do it. Now we know a little, compadre. Truly we have seen and know where it [*the magic*] *was kept."*

Feliciano: "Now you speak a little to God who gave his little child. And what if tomorrow you should come? Now is the time we speak to God, we speak to the Virgin Mother. Don't kill and don't give suffering. Better not do anything. Please don't do anything at night; please do nothing as I have told you. Thus your children [*the younger curers*] *have*

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heard our hearts. The people will hear that we didn't do anything. The true curers looked. We came to the place and we found it."

The curers left the town hall, one by one, saying the pat?o?tan to the judges as they left. The judges remained.

President: "We have heard clearly what we waited here to hear. They have brought back a little soda."

Judge: "So it is for your work [referring to the soda], what you went to do there [in the hills]."

President: "It is good what you did, but you are afraid because of that." Judges laugh.

The curers in public performances nominally recognize as leading curers the two major speakers for the group, Feliciano of Yetawitz and Emilio of Alannantik. However, these men are not recognized as true leaders. Feliciano lives in the despised barrio of Yetawitz and is associated with the kuriketik, (the inhabitants of the colonia of San Vicente), while Emilio himself has been accused of witchcraft. But the situation required someone to represent the group from each side, and so there was compliance with this temporary role.

In the public gathering, the curers refrained from accusing anyone, and denied that they had knowledge of the witch. The older curer (not recognized as leader but serving in the place of an elder) warned the group not to kill anyone as a result of the meeting. That evening, the president and his brother announced on the loudspeaker of the cantina that they did know who was trying to murder the president, that it was the curer who was absent, and that he should desist. The curer responded by announcing on another cantina loudspeaker that he was innocent. On the following day, the accused appeared in the town hall with two family-sized bottles of beer. He said that he did not want the president to continue accusing him, since he was not guilty and had truly been sick. (He had consulted the I.N.I. clinic nurse rather than one of his colleagues and had received treatment for a headache. This was commented upon by his opponents, who interpreted it as showing his lack of faith in traditional curing practices.)

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The open confrontation by the civil authorities with the suspected witch, in which they warned him to stop before violence resulted, represents a new strategy in the contest between officials and curers. Formerly even when there was strong suspicion against a man, the principales and judges kept quiet. If they acted, it was to kill the suspect without forewarning. The new strategy reveals the position of strength from which they now operate. That the president could joke in the town hall about the fear of the judges in dealing with the accused curer (see his final remark above) is indicative of a changed attitude. Incidents such as that of the curer consulting the clinic nurse instead of his fellow curers, which was noted and commented upon by the brother of the president, may further serve to undermine the townspeople's belief in the power of the curers.

In the weeks following the incident, the president and his brother discussed the incident, pointing out their fearlessness in openly confronting the witch. The curers clearly tried to deny any responsibility as a group with the remark: "Whoever did it did not advise us." They expressed the feeling that it is against professional ethics: "Whoever did it is a very bad witch"; but they refuse to name him or admit knowledge of who did it. "We do not know where it is or what it is that he did." The behavior of the curers in this incident is clearly defensive and stems from their loss of control and initiative.

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Political Parties and Factions

In 1950 the first contest for the post of president was started by two brothers who had secured the backing of the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN). Never before had anyone initiated his own candidacy outside the traditional nomination procedure through the old officials in the town hall. The brothers lived in the new barrio of Yut Hok, the ejido land grant of Ahk'olnantik. The candidacy disturbed the customary alternation of posts between Ahk'olnantik and Alannantik. Threatened by the imbalance, the leaders of Alannantik secured the backing of the Partido Revolucionario Institutionalizado (PRI) for their candidate. The PAN candidate won the election. However, he was never able to consolidate political sup-

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159 622 177 178 [454] [754] [756] partners. He sold a few shares of a truck he and his family owned to Indians, but he retained the controlling interest. His wife was reputed to be a witch, and was an active curer, combining old and new treatments of illnesses.

His position was challenged in the 1960s by the Ladino schoolmaster, who had been remarkably unsuccessful from his arrival in 1953 until that time in gaining personal power and influence. His intercession in a local homicide case involving a father's murder of his son outraged the townspeople, some of whom threatened to kill him. His attempts to have water installed aroused the curers against him since they were accustomed to bathing their patients at the source of the spring from which they were debarred when the plumbing was installed. His demands that children within the legal age limit should not only attend school but should be prohibited from marrying until they had completed their schooling caused the anger of parents who wanted to give their daughters in an early and profitable marriage.

159 875 177 178 563 558 [312] [756] [871] [582]

Gradually, however, the schoolmaster extended his own base of support. He minimized his attack on local customs, adhering only to those laws affecting the school population, over which he had a great deal of control. Some of his support came from the orthodox Catholic members of the community; he extended his control through compadre relationships with over eighty members of the community. He showed movies which he acquired from the United Nations and other educational film sources and gave away medicines acquired from the health officials in the state capitol who were his friends. From one of these sources of philanthropy he acquired wool shawls which he gave to every woman in the town.

159 875 177 178 563 558 [608] [546] [278] [431]

The professor demanded no return from the townspeople other than their respect and admiration; he was a person who enjoyed commanding others and needed an arena in which to project his own personality. In his early years in the town, he had to satisfy this need by capturing stray tourists and plying them with soda pop or coffee. His first opportunity to gain leadership in the local sphere came in 1963, when he supported the new truck-owning cooperative. He used the influence of contacts in the state capital, including compadres, friends, and relatives of his wife's family. He promoted the cooperative's attempt to gain the presidency. One of the first

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4. In a series of confrontations, the civil officials have challenged the social control functions of the curers. Witch-killings in which many of the victims have been curers have minimized but not overcome the power of these men.

5. The priest has succeeded in establishing control over the church, but the Indians may yet succeed in deposing him, a plan they were putting into effect when I left town.

The Indians are now aware of their rights to limit—or eliminate if necessary—the self-appointed caciques. The new cacique promotes the community welfare not only in his rhetoric but in the services he performs for the officials. His involvement in political affairs is tolerated, not encouraged, and the officials are ready to turn to alternative sources of aid in their activities.

The involvement of the PRI in local elections has not introduced a new center of power in the political arena. Political factions are based on economic interests contained within the town, and the autonomy of the town has in no way been affected by leadership from party headquarters in the state capitol. The community and the party use each other for their own ends in almost complete ignorance of what is occurring in the domain of the other.

The system of beliefs and understandings has changed along with these organizational changes. The most significant change has been the waning belief in the guardianship of the ancestors. The absence of the curers at the fiesta of the caves means that they no longer have this ritual occasion to validate their claims by communicating with the ancestors. The loss of leadership and of a hierarchy of prestige within the ranks of curers has removed internal controls over the profession and further undermined their position. The diminishing respect with which they are treated in the town hall and the increasing number of murders of curers accused of witchcraft is directly related to the loss of belief in their power as guardians. Since they were not an integral part of the civil-religious hierarchy, as the curers were in Oxchuk (Villa Rojas 1947), this has not upset the hierarchy, but it has changed the balance of power in the wider community.

The diminishing significance of the leadership of the principales is tied

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to the loss of belief in the curers. The principales were formerly conceived to be overseers of the curers, men who, because of their advanced age, could determine whether the curers were acting in the interest of the town. With the loss of this social control function, along with the loss of other functions such as holding public funds and helping the judges to interpret the law, they have declined to the level of ceremonial figures dissociated from political action.

The forms of political organization remain the same, but there has been a shift in the balance of power from leaders whose authority rested on guardianship linked with the ancestors to leaders who can deal with the external power structure. The emergent forms of political organization can be partially assessed in the meaning participants assign to the events which precipitated this process of change. To paraphrase George Herbert Mead (1938:liii) it is the "organization of perspectives" concerning the past events and the present conditions which will effect the emergent forms. The analytical problem can be phrased with the questions, "In what dialectical terms is the conflict cast?" and "What changes do the members of the community perceive as an outcome of the struggle?" Whereas in the colonial period the conflict between the Indians and their Spanish conquerers was seen as a struggle for control between Catholicism and traditional religion, today the conflict is phrased as one of opposed economic interests. In the civil sphere, factional opponents seek the support of extra-communal power holders to gain their ends. In the religious sphere, the Indians see the conflict as one in which their control over the church and the income derived from it is opposed to the priest's growing influence.

In this reorganization of perspectives, the Indians share some of the goals of the dominant society, but they continue to oppose themselves to the Ladino world. For this reason they are willing to preserve the form of the civil-religious hierarchy as a means of asserting their independence from the dominant society. They see the community not only as a defensive screen against the outside world, but as a springboard for entry into the national economic and political life. They are now consciously taking advantage of pro-Indian sentiment to secure a preferred position in this society. Their awareness of their advantage over the deculturated Indian is

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made explicit in the contrasts they make between their conditions and those of the migratory mestizo laborers who work in the sawmills and fincas in the area. They comment on the fact that these workers have no political representation and that they and their children are illiterate and do not attend school. The significant factor is that the Indians of the corporate communities not only have advantages over the mestizo worker, but they perceive these advantages and are acting in terms of them. The preservation of community traditions is seen as a means of retaining community-owned assets and of maintaining a sense of self which is threatened or destroyed when the individual Indian enters into the national society.

The rules of strategy for moving in the direction of change are a transformation of the rules of the game that the Indians hve played in the four and a half centuries since the Conquest. The overall strategy is still defensive and aimed at preserving local independence, but their tactics include new skills acquired from Ladinos. In opposing the old power elite of the curing hierarchy, the present leadership uses the same tactics of the witch-hunt that their opponents used in the past to punish deviates, but they are beginning to confront them openly when sorcery is suspected. Leaders of the new cooperatives state that their aim is to increase opportunities for the whole community, not to make individual profit.

Because the conflict has been contained within community boundaries, the statement of goals remains the same. These goals include the retention of control by local leaders over judgment of guilt or innocence, in ceremonial affairs, and by all townspeople over land. This retention of local control is the key feature of a moving equilibrium in a model of change that puts the emphasis on continuous adjustments and adaptations. In the usual models for discussing modernization, the confrontation is conceived as one between the indigenous society and the outsider representing western influence. In Tzo'ontahal, young leaders within the community have confronted old in the stated interest of preserving tradition. Occasionally they may make alliances with the old leaders as in the conflict with the priest.

These "shifts in the focus of political power within a given system" (Leach 1964:9) are the prelude to structural change. Tzo'ontahal as a case

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does not drink or have a record of fighting. Character traits are given more significance than wealth, since the minimal differences which distinguish rich from poor can be lost within a few months if a man drinks heavily or does not work. The close identification among siblings means that in accepting a suit the girl's parents will take into consideration not only the boy's reputation, but those of his brothers. If they are considered to be disobedient, lazy, or frequently drunk, their brother may have difficulty finding a woman.

Positions of ceremonial importance in the household celebrations are filled by any of the elders who have acquired knowledge of the prayers. The nakawanehetik are chosen from among any of the bilaterally-extended relatives, compadres, or padrinos who have served five times in religious office. They are selected not only on the basis of how well they know the prayers, but also on their behavior when required to drink. A man who can hold his liquor and still speak well or who quietly goes to sleep rather than fighting when drunk is preferred. The me?il k'op is selected from among the female complements of these male relatives. She acquires her knowledge of the prayers in familial settings. The b'alnialetik are chosen from the kihtz'inal (younger siblings and cousins), or from among compadres or members of neighboring households. The rank order between the two sets of roles—the nakawanehetik and b'alnialetik—depends on relative age; thus the older nakawanehetik have greater authority.

Familial roles provide both a pattern and a springboard for other roles in the community. The father-son role pair is extended to the relationships between senior and junior officials in both the religious hierarchy and the curing hierarchy. For each saint, the elder mayordomo is called "father" (*Tatil Martoma*), and the younger is called "son" (*Nič'nal Martoma*). A man must fill the junior post at least two times before taking on the senior post. For each side of the dual division, the elder curer (when there was a recognized leader) was called "father" (*Tatil ?u?ul*), and the younger was called "son" (*Nic'nal ?u?ul*) or sometimes "youth" (*Biktal ?u?ul*). The term *me?il* (woman who has borne a child) is used in the reference to ceremonial roles played by women in the household, as in the case of me?il k'op (woman speaker) and me?il č'om (mother of the betrothal).

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621 593 581 794 Familial role requirements must be fulfilled in order for public roles to be undertaken. A man must be married in order to enter into even the lowest posts in the civil and religious hierarchies.

794 556 434 554 Only in the case of the alfereces has wealth ever been a criterion for recruitment. These four officials had to be able to spend 3,000 pesos during their year in office. The heavy expenditures failed to give prestige to the official, and the display of wealth excited envy rather than respect. The result was that people called upon to accept the post had to be imprisoned before they would accept.

554 756 Recruitment to roles in almost all institutional contexts is based on innate qualities; special skills and knowledge are attributes acquired in office or other role positions rather than requirements for undertaking roles. Curers are recruited because they are recognized as having an animal spirit; they learn whatever skills are required after they have been initiated into the profession. The curers' special position in the society rests more on esoteric powers than on esoteric knowledge. Everyone in the community knows the herbs and medicines which are prescribed, and most men can give as comprehensive a taxonomy of illnesses as any practicing curer. [298]

868 241 [857] [883] Economic roles, though largely undifferentiated for each sex, are consciously learned and transmitted. Boys accompany their fathers or elder brothers to the field at about the age of eight and continue working with them until they reach independence. Observation of behavior alone would seem to indicate an unconscious absorption of the role of agricultural worker, but informants recount episodes in which training in field work was explicitly transmitted by their fathers or brothers, and formal approval of their ability to do the tasks announced to their mothers. Parents express fear that school attendance not only interferes with working in the milpa, but that it will cause the child to forget what he has learned in the field. Regardless of what other tasks a man performs, he thinks of himself as a farmer. [871]

868 323 Becoming a potter requires an even more explicit training procedure. The fine linguistic segmentation of each act and movement in the schedule of pottery-making is a clue to the explicit transmission of tasks by the

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554 the status. Community integration is achieved at the expense of limiting the range of roles through restricted recruitment and validating mechanisms.

621 794 [182] *Alternation and linkage in office-holding.* The principle of alternation between civil and religious posts serves to integrate these officers in a single functioning system and prevents the development of segmented groups. The alternation of offices between sides of the dual divisions helps to integrate the village by pairing or alternating them in the same office. Some roles served as links between the institutional domaines. Principales are the primary symbolic leaders of both hierarchies since they are chosen from among men who have completed service in both hierarchies. The alfereces formerly symbolized the unity of the civil and religious branches in the transfer of banners from the cabildo to the church and in other ceremonial duties.

621 624 794 [692] [84] The regidores and judges have remained identified with the civil authority in Tzo'ontahal, although in other towns in the area they have become almost exclusively identified with the religious hierarchy (Cancian 1965). The regidores were formerly involved in religious affairs during the household celebration for the installation of the new alférez. At this time they were called personaetik from the Spanish term persona, or personage.

731 756 178 621 Events requiring community action reveal some of the links which unite officials who play roles in different institutional settings. On the occasion of an epidemic, curers are called before the civil authority to "give an account" of who is causing the witchcraft. Formerly the curers were linked to the civil hierarchy by a system of social control in which the principales, as elders, reviewed their actions in guarding the safety and health of the community. This system of checks and balance has been broken by the shift in power from the principales to the president.

794 621 182 The nakawanehetik provide the links between the household and the civil and religious hierarchies. They transmit the knowledge of ritual prayer and acts and officiate at the inauguration of officials. They serve as stage directors in maintaining the traditional household rituals and in ensuring continuity in public ceremonials.

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People who fail to conform to the customs of the town are said to lack "reason." This category includes those who do not attend to the advice of their elders. People from outside of town who do not behave in conventional patterns are said to be "of another sort."

Institutionalized patterns of behavior differ as to the degree of explicitness of the association between action and reason. Curing practices are most directly attached to an understanding of why they are performed. Ritual practices in the cult of the spirits are tied to a more general explanatory system in which something should be done "because it was the custom of our ancestors."

Competency. Judgments concerning the intelligence of a person and his ability to adjust to his social and physical environment complement the criteria of morality and reasonableness. Alertness, or intelligence is associated with the possession of more than one soul: a person may have from one to a dozen additional souls. Curers and witches, by virtue of their possession of an animal spirit, are by definition very intelligent. Evaluations of alertness are often made in discussing the personalities of others. In the myth concerning the three brothers and the honey (Chapter 8) God, the Elder Brother, was described as "not very bright," Jesus Christ, the Second Brother, as "a little brighter," and the Holy Ghost, the Youngest Brother as "the brightest." Alertness is usually associated with manipulation for one's own advantage, but is not necessarily antithetical to having a good heart. In the myth mentioned above, the youngest brother outwits his two older brothers to his own advantage, and coincidentally that of the world.

The word *b'ol* is used figuratively to express the opposite of alertness, stupidity. Literally it means one who is mute; the connection is significant. A child born mute is said to have had its soul stolen at birth so that he must exist without speech. The power of speech is highly valued and the prestigeful roles are accorded to those who can speak well in both formal and informal exchanges. It is a dangerous skill, since the ability to talk to the gods gives an advantage to the speaker over the general population. The ability to speak to the earth, a talent which people say the ancestors possessed and which curers in the neighboring town of Chamula still

"gift of the gods," liquor, to the party whose interests have been slighted. This is done in the case of a suitor who is asking for a woman of the other side of the dual division; he gives the bachelors of that side a garrafón of liquor in compensation for the loss of a potential mate. Liquor has become a substitute for the sacrifice of a child by a man being initiated into the curing profession. Informal offerings of liquor may be made between neighbors or relatives who have been fighting with each other. Liquor is a kind of universal social solvent in disputes, and figures importantly in court cases which are always terminated in a drinking session.

Another technique is simply a payment in money to compensate for damages. In some homicide cases, the payment of "blood money" has compensated the family of the victim to avoid legal action. This is never done, however, if the community agrees that the victim was a witch. Payment of fines in court is another such form of compensation. These payments or offerings minimize the bloodshed or personal involvement in conflictual relations. Payment by the man judged guilty will ensure his reincorporation into his customary place in the community without stigma.

While it is impossible to elicit from informants a theory of roles, it is possible to formulate the principles underlying roles. These are deduced from behavioral observations and from evaluations made of the performances of others. They can be summarized in the following propositions:

1. There is a clear separation between role and role-bearer. This is seen most clearly in the passage through civil and religious offices with a minimum of "halo" effect. It is also found in the situation of household officials whose authority in directing affairs within a household ceases when the ceremony in which they officiate is over. The separation ensures flexibility in a closed social system, enabling people to shift from one role to another. It also permits continuity in a system which requires an almost complete turnover of personnel each year.

2. Function performed is separate from role in which it is performed. This applies even in those roles which are designated on the basis of the most important function required of the performer, for example woman speaker, liquor measurer, and basket carrier. All of

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621 578 177 178 [114] [474] [182] was channeled along existing lines of competition. During my stay in the community from 1964 to 1966, most conflicts were attributed to economic competition between the two trucking cooperatives. Along with this, the waning of the position of the principales has undermined the confidence of the people in the system of checks and balances in which the principales watched over the judges, the judges watched over the curers, the curers watched over the people to see that no one brought in evil, and the ancestors watched over everyone. [756] Curers are more and more often accused of witchcraft and are frequent victims of homicide. The sense that they are the guardians of the pueblo and the agents of the ancestors is nearly dead. They are consulted only because the people feel that, because of the evil in them, they can fight the evil caused by others.

621 756 177 178 The shift in power from the old leaders to the new has not been accompanied by a shift in ideological allegiance. The new leaders cannot offer the security the people felt when they were living in the eyes of the ancestors. The curers remain as a powerful group because of their claims of being able to fight evil, but there is no longer a legitimate authority controlling their use of destructive forces.

561 554 177 178 A system of authority based on rule by elders is a structural correlative of a behavior pattern in which people act out the ways of the ancestors. This applies to the schematized behavior contained in rituals and in traditional productive activities. The ideology of a seniority-based prestige system persists at the explicit level at the same time that behavioral changes in contradiction to this are occurring.

626 177 178 Social control in a system of behavior based on what was done in the past depends upon the belief that people are carrying out their lives "in the eyes of the ancestors." Ritual behavior in Tzo'ontahal seems to confirm this, but in view of the waning belief in the presence of the ancestors and the loss of confidence in their agents, the curers, this behavior is a kind of social lie designed to perpetuate the old code of morality. In their everyday behavior, people no longer act on the same premises. The social lie is perpetuated because the people who enjoyed power in the old social system—the curers and the elders—do not wish to relinquish it. It will last only so long as they can find successors, and with the abolition of the recruitment through alfereces, this should not be for long.

CHANGE OF OFFICIALS

ment, engrossed as I was in the task of eliciting the formal sequence of events, "Quiet, S.; let's get on with the fiesta." He persisted in what interested him. 124

Eleven years ago they [who? enemies?] tried to get me. I had a piece of land in hot country. My house here was not ready, but the wood was ready. M. C. a neighbor was jealous [*šil yoʔtan*, 'saw his heart']. He had caused another neighbor's illness. He was my wife's *muʔ* [literally 'brother-in-law,' in this case the informant's wife's fa's sis's husband]. He didn't have corn or beans. He was jealous because of my crops and the big house I was going to build. 124 578 [754] [601] [602]

By now I was asking questions and taking notes. I interposed, "How did you know?" 124 578

I knew because when I got sick, the curer (who was the dead husband of the widow who came to the judges' house) told me. The *cabron* (goat) witches leave their signature in the blood *(yaḵ hilel firma ta čičʔ)*. Then I went to a curer in Chamula who confirmed it. 754 756

"How did he speak to you?"

In Tzotzil. Then I went to Las Casas. Another curer, also a Chamulteco, said, "Here is his signature in your blood. He is working alone." On January 7 I fell in bed. All month from January to the 19th of April I was very sick. I went to Cruz Quemada (colonia of Tzoʔontahal) where F. G. cured me. He burned candles at the curing arch and prayed. 124 578 755 756 [782]

"Whom did he pray to?"

The hills, the holy land. Then I got well, but I was very tired. My Swana [wife, Juana] told me "He is going to kill you." I had a rifle. I filled it and went out, but then I returned. Another day I took two measures of trago, took my rifle and went to his house. He was sleeping with his wife close to him in bed, the way we sleep here. I fired four times. The bullets went in his back and came out front. One entered the arm of his wife. Now people say of me I am a killer. I went to the townhall for the enquiry. The man's wife said the door [of the house] was open. She said she did not see me. Afterward I got well. If I hadn't killed him, I never would have lived. Now I am having more trouble first because of the cooperative, then because of my brother being president, and then the comisario. Let us see what will happen this year. If God lends us our life, there are going to be protests. We will walk with our pistols. Špet [wife of Ladino owner of opposing cooperative] gave 1000 pesos to a man from Magronal to kill me. 124 578 682

"How do you know?"

My compadre came and told me. Who knows how many deaths there will be!

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